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How I found my uncle's grave on the net

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Sex, drugs and weight loss

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EVERY WEEKDAY

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Mandelson offered role in S Africa



Mandelson: his friends are urging him to take the job

By ROLAND WATSON
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PETER Mandelson was on course last night to make a dramatic return to his role as election strategist by travelling to South Africa and working for a smooth transition to Nelson Mandela's successor.

The job would see the former Trade Secretary acting as special adviser to the African National Congress, helping ensure the party's return to power and the election of Thabo Mbeki as president.

Mr Mandelson's name was mentioned for the role when Tony Blair met Mr Mbeki in Pretoria during

his three-day trip to South Africa earlier this month. The MP for Hartlepool, who resigned from the Cabinet before Christmas over his £373,000 home loan from Geoffrey Robinson, the former Paymaster General, is being strongly urged by some friends to take the job. Although he is interested in the role, Mr Mandelson has yet to commit himself to it.

One downside is that the three-month election campaign in South Africa clashes with a series of critical elections in Britain. A firm date will be set next month for the South African poll, but it is expected to be in May, or June at the latest. At that

time, Labour will be involved in campaigns for the Scottish parliament, Welsh assembly, local elections in large parts of the country and the European parliament.

Labour chiefs anxious to give Mr Mandelson a quiet rehabilitation away from the limelight are at pains to keep him at arms-length from the public face of the party's campaign. But as the man who masterminded the tactics for Labour's May 1997 General Election landslide, he will inevitably be called upon in an advisory role.

Another downside is that spending eight weeks or more in the South African sun would not square with

what some of his friends see as Mr Mandelson's best route back to office, namely toiling away on the "rubber chicken circuit" as a back-bench MP for Hartlepool.

The offer of the South African job dates back to before Christmas when political staff from the South African Embassy in London visited Downing Street to talk about the possibility. Mr Blair, who wants to foster closer links with the ANC as a way of developing "third way" policies, encouraged the idea.

Following his pre-Christmas resignation and given his background in election campaigning, Mr Mandelson's name became the obvious

front-runner. Despite his reservations, senior Labour figures expect him to spend at least part of the campaign for South Africa's second democratic election in Cape Town. Mr Mandelson's ties with Africa go back to when he spent a year in Tanzania before going to Oxford.

Labour MPs would almost certainly welcome the post. They were angered by Mr Blair's decision to keep Mr Mandelson on as his "personal representative" in talks with Gerhard Schröder's German administration and believe Mr Mandelson should serve a period of "quarantine" before trying to stage a political comeback. A purely political

role, particularly working for such a long-cherished left-wing cause as the ANC, would be likely to go down favourably on Labour's backbenches. Earlier this week Mr Mandelson's involvement in the Anglo-German talks was downgraded to head off a rebellion by Labour MPs.

In a separate development, the cross-party standards and privileges committee is expected to hear from the new Parliamentary Commissioner Elizabeth Firkkin next month on whether she believes Mr Mandelson broke parliamentary rules by failing to declare his loan from Mr Robinson in the MPs' register of interests.

GPs defy Dobson's Viagra rationing

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

DOCTORS were yesterday told to prescribe Viagra free over the next six weeks before the Government can rationing of the anti-impotence drug.

Defiance of Frank Dobson's intention to curtail prescriptions from March, the Medical Association of potent men going to P should be able to re-anti-impotence pill HS.

Government's plans to ration drug were de-

These categories are likely to cover only about 15 per cent of the two million men who suffer from erectile dysfunction. Others who are confirmed by a consultant to be suffering "severe distress" as a result of their impotence would also qualify for one NHS Viagra pill a week.

Anyone else with the condition could get a prescription from his GP for Viagra, but would then have to buy the pill privately from the chemist for about £6 each.

Mr Dobson announced his plan on the day that the BMA had issued a warning it would instruct members to start prescribing the drug if no guidelines were received from the Health Department.

He was advised on November 9 by the Senior Medical Advisory Committee that there were no medical reasons why the drug could not be prescribed on the NHS by GPs. He was also advised by the committee to consider the priority that should be given to all methods of treating the condition relative to treatments for other conditions. It took Mr Dobson two and a half months to do this and he decided that the only way out is to ration treatment.

His decision was solely based on cost. "The cost of treating impotence could escalate," he said. "We have to find a sensible balance between treating men with a distressing condition and protecting the resources of the NHS to deal with other patients - for example, people with cancer, heart disease and mental health problems."

Doctors see this as an unwarranted intrusion into its duty to decide what treatment is best for a patient. During the six weeks that the Government plan is open for consultation the BMA is to encourage doctors to prescribe the pill freely on the NHS because there is no legal ban that can stop them doing so.

ught just tell swallow Smartie

Thomas Stuttaford, page 6

leading article, page 23

ed by the BMA as cruel medical within minutes announced by the th Secretary.

r Dobson wants to limit NHS prescriptions for Viagra to men suffering from special conditions. These are se who have had prostate strations or radical pelvic gery and those suffering n spinal injuries, diabetes, multiple or single gene neurological disease.

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Gurkhas searching cliffs above Hastings yesterday on the third day of the hunt for the missing ten-year-olds, Lisa Hoodless and Charlene Lunn

Gurkhas join hunt for lost girls

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

FIFTY Gurkhas joined the search in Hastings for the missing ten-year-olds, Lisa Hoodless and Charlene Lunn yesterday, as police said that there had been four unconfirmed sightings of the girls in London since they disappeared on Tuesday.

The Gurkhas joined 300 police and 50 military police on the third day of the operation as the hunt spread from Hastings to open ground, woodlands and cliff tops in the surrounding Sussex countryside.

Officers from the Metropolitan Police were checking three unsubstantiated sightings in Plumstead, southeast London - two on trains and one on a bus - and one near the crematorium in Ruislip, northwest London, where the ashes of Charlene's mother, who died two years ago, were interred.

Parents' anger, page 5

Minister to meet IRA families

Victims of the IRA are outraged by the Northern Ireland Security Minister's plan to meet the families of eight IRA men who were killed in an SAS ambush as they were driving a mechanical digger carrying a 200lb bomb at the RUC station in Loughall in 1987.

Strike miners attack police

Striking coalminers hijacked lorries and tore through barricades in the central town of Cossettibi as police tried to block their march to the Romanian capital. At one stage they held policemen hostage. Closure of the mines is recommended by the World Bank and the IMF.

Friends angered by Monet queue

Temper flared outside Burlington House as hundreds of Friends of the Royal Academy queued for up to two hours to see the Monet exhibition preview. When the exhibition opens to the public tomorrow tickets will be timed to avoid congestion, but no such system was in place for the preview.

Robertson joins Laura Ashley

The Rev Pat Robertson, the religious broadcaster who was once a contender for the Republican presidential nomination, has joined the board of Laura Ashley, which reported a sharp fall in Christmas sales and has just lost another chief executive.

Four killed in mid-air crash over school

By PETER FOSTER

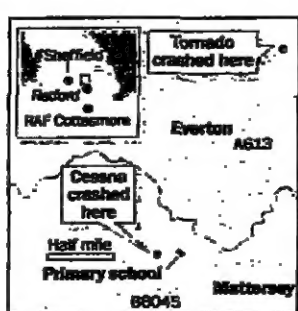
A VILLAGE primary school came within a split-second of disaster yesterday after an RAF Tornado jet collided in mid-air with a Cessna light aircraft leaving four people dead.

Children from Mattersey school, near Worksop, north Nottinghamshire, were sitting at morning lessons when they heard a loud explosion shortly before 11.30. Seconds later, according to witnesses, debris from the light aircraft rained down over nearby fields, some pieces landing 200 yards from the school.

Less than a minute later in the village of Everton, three miles away, people reported another explosion as the Tornado GRI bomber came down half a mile from homes.

The £17 million Tornado, with two pilots on board - an RAF instructor and an Italian Air Force trainee - has manually operated ejector seats. One of the crew, the Italian, succeeded in ejecting before impact with the Cessna, but he did not survive.

Wing Commander Crispin Edmonds, acting station commander at RAF Cottesmore in Rutland, from where the Tornado had taken off, said that



the jet had been on a routine flight. RAF Cottesmore is the home of the Tri-National Tornado Establishment, formed in 1979 to train pilots and navigators from the RAF, and the German and Italian air forces. Families of the victims were being contacted last night. No names had been released.

David Learmount, editor of *Flight International*, claimed that the system for preventing mid-air crashes over much of Britain was primitive. Routes in and out of airports are covered by air traffic control systems but in uncontrolled air space, mainly over rural areas, light planes flying above 1,000ft can go where they like. "Around half of all UK air space is completely uncontrolled," he said.

Police were yesterday beginning an investigation as the Air Accident Investigation Branch began sifting through wreckage. They confirmed that the Cessna had taken off from a private airfield at Gamston, near Retford, with two men on board.

Yesterday parents, some in tears, collected their children from Mattersey school and told of their relief after hearing how close it had been to disaster. Teresa Mapplebeck, 27, who has a four-year-old daughter, Stephanie, there said: "I heard a crack and saw the plane falling from the sky. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I dialled 999 then rang my friend, I was in a panic."

Mrs Mapplebeck then scooped up her son Liam, two, and drove to Mattersey. "I thought it had come down on top of the school. When I got there I saw debris on the road. There was a map which I think came from the plane. People were crying."

Rob Morley, collecting his daughter, Samantha, eight, and son, Dan, six, said: "I was driving with the radio on when I heard. I did not have a number for the school but telephoned a friend who told me how close they had all come."

Samantha said: "We heard this bang, and went rushing to the windows. We saw the man parachuting down."

Douglas Scrivner, of Mattersey, said: "I saw a little plane flying around then I saw a jet which came out of nowhere. It went straight through the middle of the light aircraft. Those on board would have had no chance."

Linda Watkinson, 48, who lives 500 yards from the Everton crash, watched the RAF plane spiral to the ground.



A piece of the Cessna after RAF jet "came out of nowhere"

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Total recall? Here is the talking equivalent of invisible ink

Britain's new Trade and Industry supremo has an amazing ability. Stephen Byers is the talking equivalent of invisible ink. Within seconds of his speaking you cannot recall a word he has said: he simply wipes himself from your consciousness.

I was at Westminster early yesterday for Questions to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. It was the dispatch box debut of Peter Mandelson's replacement. I needed to note Mr Byers's answers.

It was spooky. I couldn't. Time and again I tried to write down what Byers was saying or had just said. Time and again, all recollection fled.

Byers rose. My mind began to wander. I pinched myself and gripped a pen, forcing myself to listen. "I would like to thank my hon friend," droned Byers to Stephen Ladyman (Lab, S Thame) "for his warm words of welcome..."

Attention began to slip. I wrestled with oblivion but an unseen force was loosening pen from fingers. I wrenched

attention back. "... We can do more..." — and my mind blanked. Short-term memory was wiped.

So total is Stephen Byers's self-wipe function that it may be some form of hypnosis, a horrifying new technique in mind-control now learnt by new Labour. The fellow speaks and — first — it's gone, snatched from recollection by the some mysterious force.

And new Labour ministers can now do this. They leave no mental trace. Stephen Byers is the typewriter with no

ribbon, the leadless pencil, the printer without ink. "External financing limit..." regime in place... high quality service at affordable prices... "Byers bleated — and I blanked. The rest escapes me.

Byers is neither big nor small. His hair was grey. His accent was neutral. His suit was grey. His tie was grey. He

looks like the assistant accountant to a large dental practice in Northampton. He was wearing glasses — or was he? Damn it, that's gone too.

When I managed to re-engage consciousness, he was speaking again, to George Turner (Lab, NW Norfolk). "Steps have been taken..." I've no doubt at all... steps

have been taken... no conflict... no doubt... no conflict... only fragments survive, shards of cliché.

But Byers's was not the only debut at Industry Questions. Michael Wills, the new Minister for small business, was at the dispatch box for the first time. He will go far. Mr Wills takes self-wipe to new levels. I cannot even remember seeing him in the Chamber before.

And Hansard's computer-memory is susceptible to his magnetic powers of erasure. Wills seems to have wiped

most of his previous interventions from the record, which notes only eight utterances in 20 months.

On yesterday's showing these are the very models of a modern Labour minister. Replying to a question about abolishing red tape from Brian Cotter (Lib-Dem, Weston Super-Mare), Mr... or... crickey, something is trying to pluck the name from my memory... replied "Madam Speaker, this Government is committed, we are committed, we are indeed committed..." What

devilish cunning. We remember that they are committed, very committed indeed — but to what? Ah, that we cannot quite recall.

Answering, minutes later, on the Millennium Experience, the Minister Janet Anderson unwittingly hinted at a chilling comparison with the New Labour Experience. In the "Mind" zone of the Dome, she said, "the public will be able to interact with advanced, intelligent robots".

To interact with Mr Byers is to do likewise.



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

IRA victims attack plan to meet relatives

BY MARTIN FLETCHER, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

VICTIMS of IRA atrocities expressed outrage last night at a minister's decision to meet relatives of an IRA unit killed by the SAS while attacking a Co Armagh police station.

Adam Ingram, the Northern Ireland Security Minister, has agreed to meet the families of eight IRA men ambushed as they were driving a mechanical digger carrying a 200lb bomb at the RUC station in Loughall in 1987.

The SAS was forewarned of the attack and 40 soldiers took part in the ambush which effectively wiped out the IRA's East Tyrone brigade. A passer-by died in the crossfire. The IRA detonated the bomb

during the gunfight, and it destroyed part of the station.

"It's a despicable act," said Brian McConnell, secretary of the group Families Acting for Innocent Relatives which represents victims of IRA violence in Co Armagh. His members plan to picket the meeting at Stormont on Monday.

"By no stretch of the imagination can these people be described as victims. These people, or their relatives, took away lives and the fact the Government is now consulting with them adds insult to injury. We feel Adam Ingram is dancing on the graves of the real victims by giving credence to these killers. What's

right is now wrong in this country."

Andrew Mackay, the Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, called Mr Ingram's decision "disgraceful, outrageous and insulting to all those killed by the IRA" and urged him to cancel the meeting.

Mr Ingram has special responsibility for the victims of the Troubles, and for taking forward the recommendations of a report on them produced by Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, former head of Northern Ireland's Civil Service.

The Northern Ireland Office said: "Mr Ingram has wanted the fullest possible consultation on Sir Kenneth's report. He has met a wide range of groups and individuals who describe themselves as victims. In the majority of cases these meetings have been entirely private. He will be in listening mode when he meets the Loughall Truth and Justice Campaign."

The Tories have called a Commons debate next Wednesday on the punishment beatings by loyalist and republican paramilitary groups. They will demand that the release of terrorist prisoners be halted unless the beatings and shootings stop.



The SAS killed eight IRA men in the ambush in 1987



Even the soldiers are happy to see the demise of Fort Whitehead. One who watched yesterday's demolition said troops there were on a hard routine: everything had to be bombproof to withstand the constant mortar attacks by the IRA, who saw it as a symbol of British oppression

Barracks demolished in name of peace

FORT WHITEHEAD, the massive army base that has dominated the skyline of republican West Belfast for 20 years, lay in rubble last night. After resisting countless IRA attempts to destroy it, the imposing barracks, with its 50ft watchtowers and bombproof walls, is being torn down as part of government efforts to bolster the Ulster peace process.

Perched high above the city at the

foot of the Black Mountain, Fort Whitehead became one of Belfast's best-known landmarks and the object of bitter republican hatred. At the height of the Troubles it was home to thousands of soldiers and the target of constant IRA attacks.

Now its barricades and firing ranges are all but gone. When the demolition work is complete in a few months' time, the only building left will be the

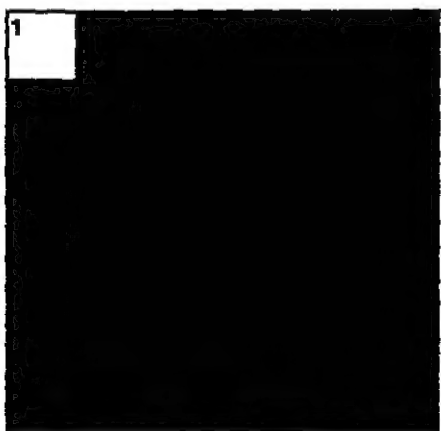
original candle factory, which was converted into a gymnasium when the troops moved in.

Republicans who saw the base as a symbol of British oppression said its demise was long overdue. "The observation posts looked right out into the surrounding housing estates and kept people constantly under surveillance," Marie Moore, a Sinn Féin councillor, said. "We now hope the land will be

given back to the people in the area to have an industrial estate and maybe even a tourist attraction which would take in the Black Mountain."

Some of the soldiers based there were no less happy to see Fort Whitehead go. "Soldiers here were on a hard routine," said one as he watched the demolition. "Everything is bombproof, even the windows in your rooms are bombproof."

easy@demon[no.3]



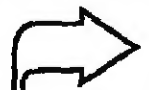
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Prisoner can sue for damages

A convicted murderer who was slashed with a razor by two other jail inmates won the go-ahead yesterday to sue the prison for damages.

The Court of Appeal upheld a decision by a County Court judge last year that Gartree prison in Leicestershire acted negligently in not taking reasonable care to ensure the safety of Robert Harshorn. The ruling means that Harshorn, who was jailed in 1986, can now seek to have his claim for damages assessed over the attack in July 1995, which left him needing 88 stitches and scarred for life.

It also paves the way for other prisoners who can show that the authorities had been negligent in bringing similar claims. At present, only prisoners who are widely accepted to be likely targets of attack, such as child abusers, can seek to pursue such claims.

Bottom of class

A Leeds family action group lost a plea for a judicial review of the city council's decision to close Middle Park High School, which was bottom of the national GCSE league table. The school, which serves a council estate, has a falling register and a deficit of £346,000.

Wife speaks out

The wife of one of the policemen facing criticism over the Stephen Lawrence case defended him yesterday. Rosemary Hiley said that her husband, former Detective Chief Superintendent William Hiley, was not a racist, and that Sir William Macpherson's inquiry had been "unfair and unjust".

Stress claim

A detective who retired early because of ill health is suing Merseyside Police for damages, claiming he was negligently overworked. Detective Constable Paul Hutton, 45, who left in 1993, claims in his action that he suffers stress so badly that he will never be able to work again.

£100 levy to fund new food agency

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE Government is to publish a Bill for the establishment of a Food Standards Agency next Wednesday, along with proposals for funding the new body.

This means that the legislation could be introduced in the current parliamentary session, even though it was missing from the Queen's Speech last November.

How quickly the new agency becomes reality is likely to depend mainly on whether reform of the House of Lords proceeds smoothly, freeing parliamentary time for consideration of the Bill.

The Government is expected to propose that the £100 million-a-year cost of running the agency should be met largely

from an annual levy of £100 on each of the 600,000 shops, hotels, restaurants and other food premises in Britain.

First proposed in a White Paper a year ago, the agency is intended to act as an independent watchdog on food safety, and will take over many of the functions now exercised by the Ministry of Agriculture.

A series of alarms over food safety, from salmonella to "mad cow" disease, have undermined the credibility of the ministry, which has had the role of promoting the food industry as well as policing it.

Much of this latter function would pass to the new agency, which would be chiefly accountable to the Secretary of State for Health.

Davies returns to limelight

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT

RON DAVIES, who resigned as Welsh Secretary last autumn, is today to return to the limelight for the launch of an RSPB pamphlet on how people will be able to use the Welsh assembly to advance "green" concerns.

The event, in Cardiff, is the start of an effort by Mr Davies to regain his standing as a key figure in the assembly. He plans a speech in Cardiff next month to warn the Prime Minister that more freedom should be given to Labour Party members in Wales. But Mr Davies's credibility depends on his being selected as a candidate for the assembly for Caerphilly, his Westminster constituency, tomorrow week.

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Millions trace war dead on Internet

War Graves Commission site is outstanding success, reports Michael Binyon

MORE than four million people have sought details of their relatives and loved ones in the two months since the names of all those killed in the two world wars were posted on the Internet. The figure is higher than the number of people who have visited the Internet site of Diana, Princess of Wales, and more than twice the number of war dead whose names have been recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The commission, set up in 1917 to tend the graves of soldiers of the British Empire who fell on the Western Front and elsewhere, published all its records, computerised since 1995, on the Internet on November 9, two days before Armistice Day. Since then the site has received more than 55,000 hits a day.

The commission has a staff of 1,200 around the world, the

majority of them gardeners and stone masons. It has a yearly budget of £32 million, funded by the six founding countries: Britain, which pays over 75 per cent of the costs; Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India. The commission's main task is tending the impressive cemeteries, war memorials and graves across the vast swath of northern Europe that saw ferocious fighting in both world wars; and in more than 100 other countries where Commonwealth soldiers have died.

The commission has offices close to the battlefields at Arras and Ypres and also in Rome. Keeping as detailed records as possible to "defeat the oblivion of time" has been a prime task from the earliest days, next of kin and comrades in arms have located and visited the graves and memorials.

In the 1920s the records were kept in card indexes in 3,000 drawers, cross-referenced to 1,500 cemetery registers. It was impossible to find anyone without knowing the surname or details of the date of death or regiment. A search carried out after a written request costs £2.

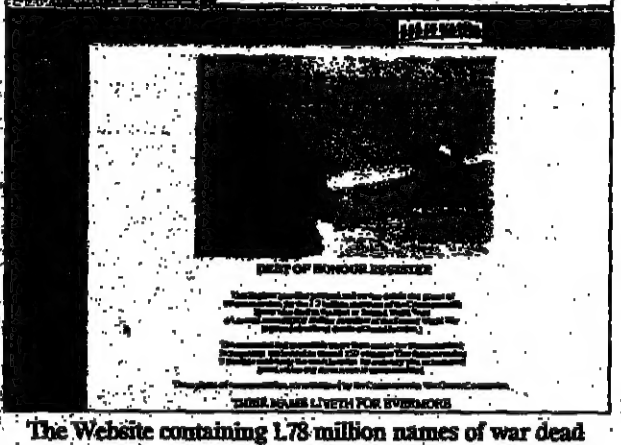
The new database is free and makes it possible to find people with only scant information to go on. The commission says it will be particularly valuable for family historians, teachers, researchers, journalists and all those keeping alive the name and memory of those who fell.

Some of the most famous British poets and architects have been associated with the design of the cemeteries and the wording on war memorials. They include Rudyard Kipling, Frederick Kenyon, Edwin Lutyens, and Reginald Bloomfield. Under Fabian Ware, the first vice-chairman of the commission, the firm and, at that time controversial, principle was established that all the dead were to be uniformly commemorated, without distinction between rank, race or creed. All headstones are permanent and similar.

The Internet site reproduces these principles on screen. Each name called up has the same brief description: name, rank, company and date and place of death. On each there is a picture of two poppy wreaths at the foot of the Cenotaph and the celebrated Kipling epitaph: "Their name liveth for evermore."

Further information on each name gives a description of the battle, the circumstances and whatever else is known about the soldier and his regiment.

The commission's site is: <http://www.cwgc.org>



The Website containing 1.78 million names of war dead

In search of our dear Uncle Owen

Armed with only scant details, David Charter went in search of his grandfather's brother, which triggered a long forgotten memory



THERE was an unwritten rule in my family that the death of Great Uncle Owen Hawkins was, two generations on, still a subject too painful to talk about.

He was the youngest of four children and, as the baby, everyone's favourite. The few pictures that survive show he was barely out of his teens when he was shot down in the Second World War.

I remember my late grandfather lifting the rice-paper veil of a treasured photograph album and pausing over the image of his brother, a dashing young flier grinning with pride and confidence. Poor Owen, he said.

I believe my grandfather visited his grave once, somewhere on the Continent, but I don't remember him talking about it. My mother advised me not to push any questions as it would only upset him.

The details of Owen's sacrifice seemed in danger of being lost altogether when my grandfather, the last of the four siblings, died seven years ago. The lack of a memorial closer to home only added to the fragility of his memory.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission website is very easy to use. Starting without even the official address of the site, my request on the Internet's opening search screen for "War graves" produced 29 options, the second of which is the commission.

After clicking on "search the register" twice, a basic question form asks for details of surname, initial, war or year of death, service and nationality.

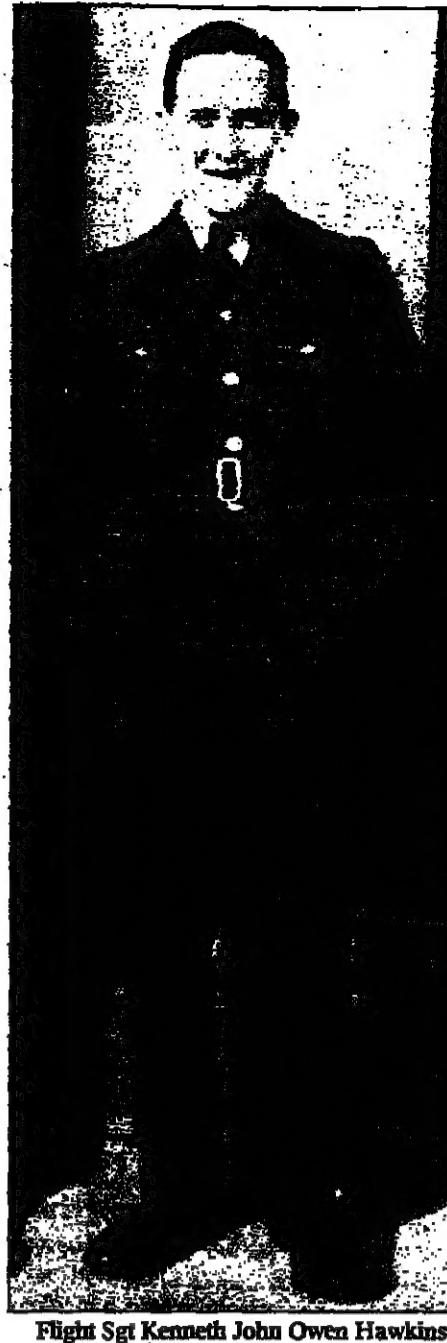
At first it seemed as if I would be disappointed. Not one O. Hawkins was among the dozens of Hawkins listed as Royal Air Force casualties.

But the first name I clicked on, the only one with an O among the initials, turned out to be Flight Sergeant Kenneth John Owen Hawkins. I knew immediately it was Great Uncle Owen because it listed his parents' address, the village where my great grandparents are buried.

My first reaction was amazement, not just at finding the records so easily but at confirmation of Owen's age. He was just 21 when he died on Wednesday July 29, 1942. He was a pilot in 23 Squadron RAF volunteer reserve. He is buried in Uden war cemetery in The Netherlands, grave 4.H.1.

My mother was delighted when I told her about the website. It triggered a fantastic last memory of her uncle, who dazzled his four-year-old niece on a surprise home visit shortly before he died. He promised to fly over the house for her and returned that afternoon, rocking the wings of his aircraft as he disappeared.

My mother's one regret about the Internet memorial is that, sadly, there is nobody left in the family of her father's generation to appreciate it.



Flight Sgt Kenneth John Owen Hawkins

The most popular sites are often the silliest

By Nick Nuttall
TECHNOLOGY
CORRESPONDENT

THE millions of websites on the Internet range from the silly and irrelevant to the serious and informative.

Whether you want to bid the Prime Minister, slap a Spice Girl or indulge your passion for sports, politics or news and current affairs, someone is there to meet your demand. One of the most popular sites is BBC On-Line - www.bbc.co.uk - which has been attracting nearly 47 million visitors a month, closely followed by Yahoo's UK and Ireland pages, with 44 million.

Other chart-topping websites covered under official figures are Line One, an Internet service provider with 22.6 million visitors a month, and So-



net, a football news service with 12.6 million a month. There are many websites to rival those in the official charts, among them Huddle's Helpers - www.huddle.com - which follows the fortunes of Glenn Huddle and his guardian angel Eileen, a cartoon character for the England coach's faith healer, in a whimsical soap opera called *Wendy Park*. Kevin Moss, of Indie Media, which has designed the site, says it attracts 200,000 visitors a month.

The popular irreverent sites tend to be showcases for computer designers. Many are a mix of alternative culture, including campaigns on green is-

sues, discussions on the legalisation of drugs and comments on football mixed with silly games. www.urban75.com, which attracts about 300,000 visits a month, is the work of Mike Slocombe, and offers, among other things, the chance to punch a celebrity.

Estimating which sites are the most popular is almost impossible, but steps are being made to audit them to produce figures like those for newspaper circulations. The Audit Bureau of Circulation is covering 70 sites, mostly those of media organisations. Among them are www.uploaded.co.uk, an electronic version of loaded magazine (six million a month); the British Tourist Authority's www.visitbritain.com (2 million); and the pop music site www.donmusic.com (1.4 million).

Taunted boy tried to scrub himself white

By Russell Jenkins

A BLACK boy tried to scrub himself white after being taunted by schoolmates who chanted the refrain from a traditional blues song often sung in assemblies.

Elaine Ramsay, 33, from Radcliffe, Manchester, has withdrawn her son, Elliott Stephens, from the school. She said she could not understand why her son kept saying he wanted to be white until her sister told her about the song, sung at Radcliffe Junior School each week in assembly for the past three years.

Black, Brown and White was written and sung by the American country blues artist Big Bill Broonzy in the 1930s to record how racial prejudice made it difficult for black people to get jobs in the deep south.

The opening verse runs: "This little song that I'm singin' about/ People, you all know that it's true/ If you're black and gotta work for livin' Now, this is what they will say to you/ They say: 'If you was white/ You'd be alright/ If you was brown/ Stick around/ But if you're black, oh, brother/ Get back, get back, get back'".

Ms Ramsay said that, be-



Elliott Stephens: tried to scrub himself white

cause the chorus is repeated five times, the children knew it off by heart and chanted it to her son in the playground. She said her son, as the only fully Afro-Caribbean child in the school, told her that everyone turned to stare at him when the song was sung.

Ms Ramsay said: "He started to say he hated being black and that he wanted to be white. He took knives from the kitchen and said he wanted to kill himself. Once I found him scratching at his skin with a nailbrush to try to make himself white."

George Purcell, the head teacher, said the song had now been withdrawn.

Missing mother murdered, police say

By Paul Wilkinson

POLICE searching for a missing mother said yesterday that they believe she has been murdered. Marsha Wray, 38, vanished two years ago this week after dropping her children Philippa and Robert at primary school.

Yesterday her younger sister, Belinda Maddison, appealed for help in recovering her body so the family could take a proper farewell. She said: "Somebody somewhere knows what happened to Marsha. It is time they came forward. Not only do I need to know but also for the sake of Philippa and Robert."

Mrs Wray's husband, Colin, 50, has admitted that their relationship was strained and that he was the prime suspect but he has denied any involvement in her disappearance. He claimed she told him she needed some time to herself and suggested she had left to start a new life.

Last May police raided their home in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, and a man was detained but later released without charge. Detective Inspector Javed Ali said that if Mrs Wray had died accidentally they should have found her body by now.

Druids take spell on duty

DRUIDS are liaising with council officers in Cornwall to protect ancient religious sites from damage when an estimated 15 million people descend on the county for the summer's eclipse. More than 100 stone circles, standing stones and chambered tombs are expected to be a focus for novice mystics and tourists when the sun is blacked out on August 11.

Steve Hargreaves, the county council's principal archaeologist, said: "Pagans feel, as we do, a certain ownership and love for these sites." A new Cornish Sacred Sites Protection Network includes representatives from the National Trust, English Heritage, the Pagan Federation and the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids. It has produced a code of conduct for visitors.

Ed Prynn, Arch Druid of the St Maryn Druids, which claims 4,000 members, said: "Anybody who has ever interfered with the stones has finished up dead in strange circumstances."

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A black and white photograph showing a wide, flat, open area in the foreground, possibly a field or a frozen body of water. A wooden fence runs diagonally across the lower half of the image. In the background, there are several large, multi-story buildings, likely houses or farmhouses, situated on a hillside. The image is grainy and has a high-contrast, almost stencil-like appearance.

CONFIDENTIAL

Security trick leads to airport inquiry

By MARK INGLEFIELD, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Government is to hold an investigation into airport security after a serious breach allegedly took place at Heathrow.

The inquiry, which was announced yesterday by John Reid, the Transport Minister, came after an undercover reporter gained a security pass to work for Skyliner Services, one of the main cleaning firms at Heathrow.

The reporter, who was working for *The Sun*, claimed that he had secured a pass despite supplying the company with a string of bogus references. Skyliner employed him three weeks later and he was given unsupervised access to the kitchen and bar areas of six aircraft. The company declined to comment yesterday.

As a result of this alleged security breach, Dr Reid has ordered BAA, the airports authority, to withdraw security passes from all Skyliner Services temporary staff. Dr Reid said that no new temporary passes would be issued "until such time as we are satisfied necessary and appropriate checks have been carried out to ensure that each individual is a suitable person to be employed at the airport". Dr Reid also asked his officials to carry out "an urgent re-

appraisal of the regulations governing the issue of all employee passes at UK airports".

Although the minister stopped short of revoking Skyliner's contract, he made it clear that this was one of the "range of punitive measures" that might be taken if the company were found to be negligent in its security procedures. *The Sun* had claimed that its reporter was left alone on six aircraft and was able to take a photograph of himself yards from the cockpit.

Dr Reid said yesterday that, so far, all he had were allegations, but "the prima facie report is sufficiently serious for all of us, public and ministers, to be concerned". He said he thought that between ten and 20 temporary staff were employed by the firm.

The Sun carried the report on Wednesday, ten years after the paper exposed security failures at the airport in the wake of the Lockerbie bombing.

"The fact that there's ten years in between should in no way diminish the seriousness," Dr Reid said. "It only takes one breach of security to undermine all of the efforts which BAA in particular, and our officials and inspectors and security specialists, have been making."

Stone inquiry to look at health law

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE independent inquiry into the care of Michael Stone, convicted last October of the murders of Lin and Megan Russell, is also to report on the adequacy of current mental health law, it emerged yesterday.

West Kent Health Authority, which was responsible for Stone's care at the time of the killings in July 1996, said that it was keen to establish whether the case should prompt the Government to consider changing the law governing the compulsory detention of people with mental health problems.

Although he was known to have a criminal record and to be prone to violent outbursts, Stone could not be detained under the Mental Health Act

against his will because he had been found to be suffering from a personality disorder deemed to be untreatable.

The case raised intense debate about what should be done to protect the public from people with personality disorders who may be a threat to others, but who have not committed a crime and cannot therefore be detained.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, attracted criticism from psychiatrists after he accused them of using out-of-date working practices. He said it was "extraordinary" that they would take on only those patients they regarded as treatable.

The panel, chaired by Robert Francis, QC, is expected to report by the end of the year.

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Valerie Marshall will lead a £720,000 quest for a naturally creamy yoghurt

Yoghurt scientists win pot of EU cash

By PAUL WILKINSON

A RESEARCH team has won a £720,000 grant from Brussels for a three-year project on making yoghurt creamy.

The European Commission is helping scientists from the dairy industry to develop a natural thickening process, avoiding the need for artificial additives and gelatine.

The team, drawn from across Europe, is led by Valerie Marshall, a microbial biochemist at Huddersfield University. She said that improving yoghurt consistency had long been a challenge for manufacturers. "We want to develop a yoghurt to get that creamy feel naturally by harnessing its natural organisms. This way is cheaper, because you're using a process that is already there."

The team was one of only 50 to win grants out of 500 applicants working on food or agriculture projects. Professor Marshall said: "I don't think it's an awful lot of money because it's shared between seven partners. That works out at about £30,000 a year to each."

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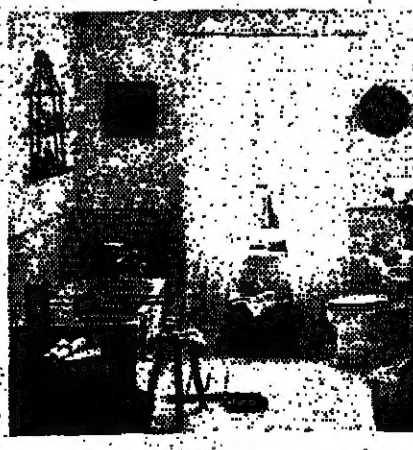
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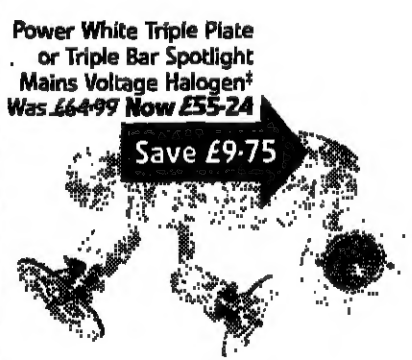


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Blair says we need more do-gooders

By MARK HENDERSON AND ALEXANDRA FREAN

A DIRECTORY providing details of voluntary organisations is to be sent to every household in Britain as part of a drive to promote charity as figures disclosed that individual giving had dropped by nearly a third over five years.

The directory, which will set out opportunities for voluntary work, is one of the initiatives announced by the Prime Minister yesterday to increase support for charities. Addressing the National Council of Voluntary Organisations conference, Tony Blair urged Britons to mark the millennium with an "explosion in giving" and for the term "do-gooder" no longer to carry a sneering tone. Mr Blair said: "Let those of us who believe in the power of community reclaim the idea of doing good and wear it as a badge of pride. It is good to do good — good for those charities and organisations and neighbourhoods in which the good is being done, but good for the do-gooder as well." His comments build on his call at the 1997 Labour Party conference for a "giving age".

Yesterday he also announced plans for a Whitehall task

force, the Active Community Unit, to co-ordinate and promote voluntary work across the country, and two new schemes that will encourage people to give time to charity.

The measures coincided with the publication by the National Council of Voluntary Organisations of figures showing that donations to charity have fallen by 31 per cent in the past five years. Separate research from the National Centre for Volunteers showed a decline in the number of people giving their time. The biggest drop was among young people. Seven years ago 55 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds said they had volunteered in the past year. The figure is now 43 per cent.

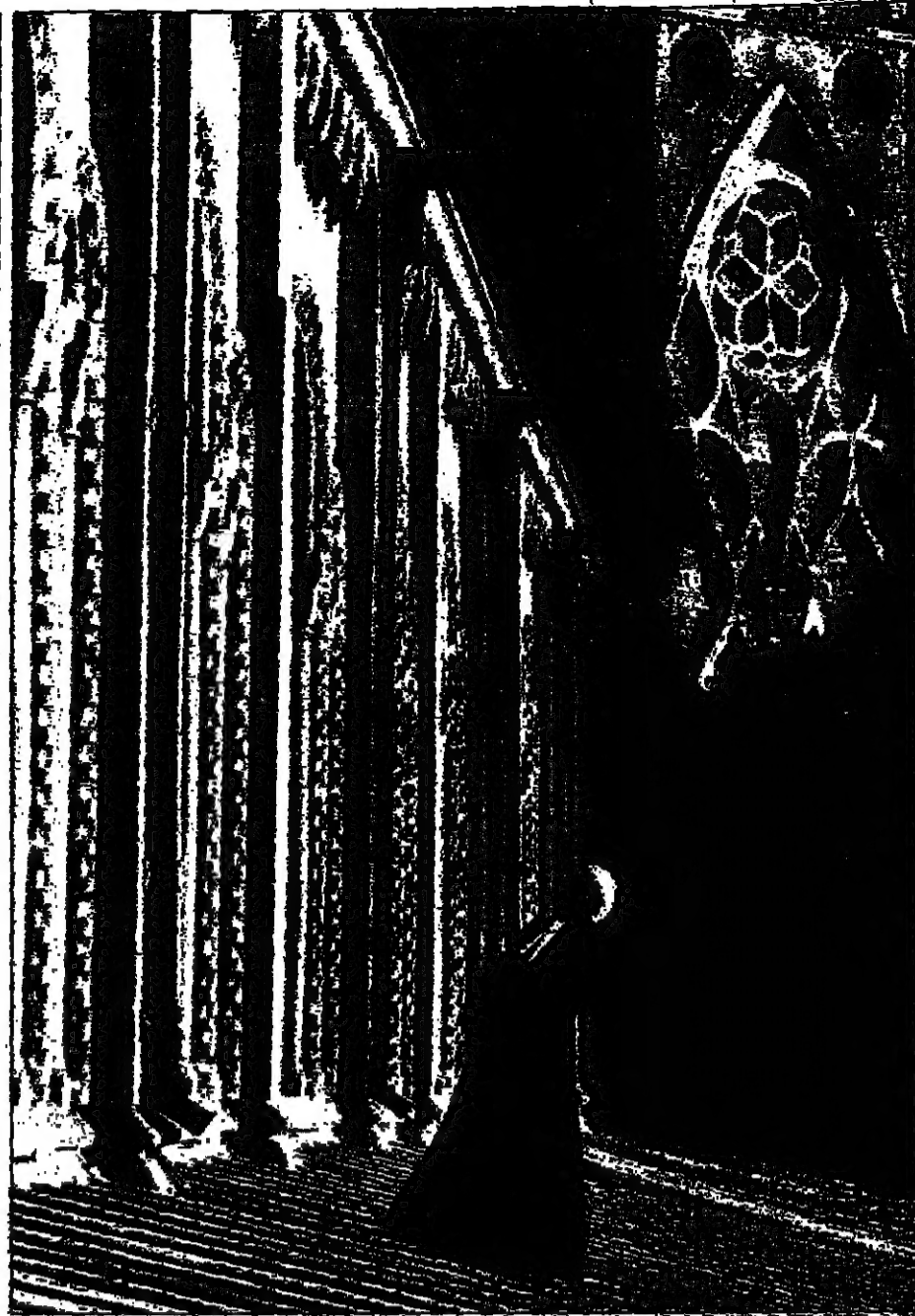
Stuart Etherington, chief executive of the NCVO, welcomed the initiatives, but called for tax breaks to encourage the rich to donate, and for charities to be exempt from VAT. "If it is a priority for government to give support to the sector, we need to see mechanisms that will help generate income and individual giving."

Mr Blair also launched the Millennium Awards Fellowship programme yesterday.

40,000 Britons will receive grants of an average of £2,000, by the end of next year to undertake community and charity projects. The £200 million programme is funded by the Millennium Commission, and an endowment fund will make the scheme permanent.

Millennium Fellows will receive a certificate of achievement, the first of which were presented by Mr Blair yesterday. These are intended to increase the esteem in which volunteers are held by society. The idea has been copied from America, where a period of voluntary service is virtually obligatory on the strongest CVs.

David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, announced details yesterday of the Millennium Volunteers programme, which will use £48 million of public money to provide thousands of 16 to 24-year-olds with opportunities for voluntary work. The scheme had been intended as a kind of civil "national service" taking in hundreds of thousands of people, but has been scaled back because of problems with long-term funding. Participants will receive certificates of achievement.



The Very Rev Michael Higgins, Dean of Ely, on the newly repaired cathedral roof

Cathedrals face funding cut for repair delays

By JOHN SHAW

CATHEDRALS that fail to carry out grant-aided repairs promptly are putting future funding at risk, Sir Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of English Heritage, said yesterday.

His warning was directed at the authorities of about a dozen cathedrals that have failed to complete work on time and to budget.

The organisation is offering the cathedrals — which he did not name — a further £9 million for repairs over the next three years. But, under the terms of the scheme the work must be carried out within the appropriate financial year. Money cannot be carried over, Sir Jocelyn said: "Those who fall behind can expect to have their level of funding reduced."

Sir Jocelyn had travelled to Ely, Cambridgeshire, to announce the funding. Just over £3 million is to be shared between 29 buildings for repairs in the next 12 months. The Cathedral Grant Scheme has paid out almost £30 million since it began in 1991.

Sir Jocelyn said Ely had set a wonderful example in its grant management. He went up on the roof to inspect nine years of repair work and admire a view stretching more than 20 miles over the flat East Anglian landscape. Ely has already received about £3 million in funding.

He said that management of the project was a tribute to the Very Rev Michael Higgins, the Dean, and his predecessor, the Very Rev Bill Patterson.

The 11th-century cathedral, known as the Ship of the Fens because of its dominance of the surrounding countryside, will get another £416,000. The money will complete repairs to the north choir aisle and fund the first part of a two-year project for work on the Gallies Porch.

Richard Halsey, head of the cathedral's restoration project and director of English Heritage in the Eastern Counties, said of the behind-schedule cathedrals: "Some have fallen behind for quite legitimate reasons, because it takes a lot to manage a project on this scale and the skills are not always available."

Salisbury Cathedral has been offered the largest grant, of £503,000, to continue work on the masonry of the west front and repairs to the medieval glazing and the southeast transept.

Other large grants have gone to Lincoln Cathedral for repairs to masonry and glazing of the Dean's Eye window, and roof and stonework in the north nave and aisle (£364,000), and Worcester Cathedral for repairs to masonry and roofs (£360,000).

City lawyers give up their time to help pupils with reading

Hannah Betts on a project that is benefiting from free books scheme

A SCHOOL named after the father of genetic engineering has come up with a cross-fertilisation strategy of its own to boost its involvement in The Times Free Books for Schools Scheme.

Thomas Fairchild School, in Hackney, East London, and Linklaters, a leading City law firm, joined forces in September to form an in-school reading programme and are now directing their combined energies to collecting tokens for the scheme.

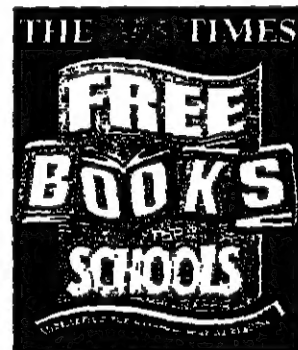
Every week 40 Linklaters lawyers and support staff devote one of their lunch breaks to teaching reading at the school. The project was massively oversubscribed, with almost 200 staff applying to help. The pairings are the same each week, so that a

bond is forged between two very different worlds.

The primary school is located in an economically deprived area and, for a large proportion of the children, English is their second language.

Alasdair Friend, the head teacher, said: "Literacy is one of our top priorities, but it's also been a real cultural challenge. We're less than five minutes away from the City, but some of our children have never been there. It's an introduction to another world."

The reading partners become firm friends. Gary McKinnzie-Smith, a trainee solicitor, reads with eight-year-old Baboucar Jeng, known as Babo. Mr McKinnzie-Smith said: "The relationship is a unique one for me; he's eight



and I'm 25. We've both enjoyed meeting someone from a different world in life." Mr McKinnzie-Smith says that Babo can be cheeky and enjoys the kudos that the scheme brings him with other children.

Since the project started, reading has become the fashionable lunchtime activity at Thomas Fairchild, with pupils lining up to meet the Linklaters' taxis. At Christmas, a

celebration was held at Linklaters for lunchtime readers.

Lately, children and lawyers alike have become avid collectors of the Free Books for Schools tokens printed in The Times and on packets of Walkers crisps. "Our token collecting's going really well. Babo enjoys crisps and I always read The Times," Mr McKinnzie-Smith said.

Does your school or business have a story to tell about its participation in The Times Free Books for Schools Scheme? If so, please call on weekdays and leave details on 0171-895 9018. At the end of the scheme, The Times will publish a Free Books for Schools honours list in which successful schools and businesses will be commended for the number of tokens they collected and for the original ways in which they did so. Telephone your nominations now.

Token, page 24

Bible class finds room at the inn

By SUE LAPPAMAN

A SUNDAY school class is to meet in a pub after having to leave the vicarage.

Children from St Peter and St Paul's Church in Shoreham, Kent, will have their lessons next to gaming machines and a pool table in the back room of the George Inn at Shoreham, Kent.

The class, now with 20 pupils, had been meeting in rooms at the former vicarage for the past 13 years but the family that lived there has decided to rent out the rooms.

The Rev Barry Simmons found the most convenient venue for the school at the pub across the road.

Mick Farris, the landlord, said: "The room at the back of the pub is not connected to the main bar." Mr Simmons said: "We shall be there only from 10.30 to 11.30 on Sunday mornings so there won't be any of the public there."

Oxford college suspends its anti-fees protester

By HANNAH BETTS

AN OXFORD college yesterday suspended one of the five students at the centre of the tuition fees protest because it fears that she is jeopardising her education. The action follows the university's decision to ban the protesters from its premises, including the Examination Schools and all libraries.

Laura Paskell-Brown, the only protester at St Hilda's College, has not been permanently expelled and can be reinstated as soon as she pays the £1,000 fee.

Elizabeth Llewellyn-Smith, the Principal of St Hilda's, said yesterday: "We couldn't carry on with a situation in which one of our students was nominally on a degree course, but not able to carry out the job she was here to do. It was a half-baked situation. It's not a punitive action — we're not doing our duty by a student if she can't work."

ed that she and the whole of the Senior Common Room would be extremely sorry if Ms Paskell-Brown decided not to reconsider her position.

The suspension will come into force on Monday, after Ms Paskell-Brown has had an opportunity to appeal. Under the ruling, she will be barred from all college buildings.

Ms Paskell-Brown, 21, said the move would force her to submit: "The last few days have been absolutely hellish, and in many ways I'm just glad it's all over. I defend my principles into the ground, but I'm being backed into a corner now and I don't think I can go on. But the campaign against fees is by no means over — we will continue our fight indefinitely."

At Somerville, four protesters are waiting to hear their fate after a meeting of the college's governing body. Dame Fiona Caldicott, Principal of the college, said yesterday that

she wanted to speak to each student before announcing the college's decision.

Yesterday the colleges issued a statement: "The university, Somerville and St Hilda's Colleges are prepared to take action in response to the non-payment of tuition fees by a small number of students."

"We regret that the protest which these students are making against the Government's changes to the funding of higher education has put them in this position. However, we must consider the consequences of their actions for their studies and the implications of their non-payment for other members of the university. We hope this matter will be resolved as soon as possible."

Today 2,000 students from around the country will take part in Oxford's biggest demonstration for nine years.

John O'Leary, page 41

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Pinochet 'can only be tried in Spain'

BY JOANNA BAILE

EXTRADITION to Spain is the only way to bring General Pinochet to justice because Chile is unlikely to put him on trial, Amnesty International said the law lords yesterday.

Lord Brown, QC, for Amnesty International, said: "It appears to be extremely unlikely that justice will be done in Chile and, given the obvious absence of any jurisdiction of an international criminal tribunal, then all that is left are extradition proceedings."

Addressing the new hearing to decide the general's fate, Professor Brownlie stated that, if extradition was denied, the former dictator "would have the benefit of a wall of impunity". He also argued that international conventions on torture and hostage-taking adopted into British law were sufficient to deny General Pinochet the immunity for a head of state that he is claiming.

Sections of the State Immunity Act 1978, which might be deemed to afford him immunity, did not do so, he said. "The State Immunity Act does not apply to criminal proceedings. In any case, you cannot have

immunity from proceedings over acts which constitute crimes in international law."

Professor Brownlie made no mention of the fact that it was Lord Hoffmann's failure to disclose his close links with Amnesty International that had caused the law lords to set aside their initial decision denying immunity to General Pinochet.

Amnesty was once again granted permission to address the hearing, and the organisation's counsel is also representing two other human rights groups as well as the families of two British victims of the Pinochet regime, William Beausire and Sheila Cassidy.

Earlier the law lords were told that tortures alleged to have been carried out under the orders of the general had long been recognised as crimes under international law. Christopher Greenwood, for the Crown Prosecution Service, on behalf of Spain, argued that there was a clear international consensus about torture. He said: "We are not dealing with an area of international law in which reasonable states differ.



Lucia Pinochet, wife of the former dictator, greeting supporters outside his home in Surrey. She thanked them for their efforts on his behalf

We are dealing with conduct which for 60 years has been unequivocally deemed to be unlawful, a crime under international law."

Professor Greenwood went on to say that the allegations against General Pinochet were not purely an internal matter for Chile. "Torture falls into the category of acts which have become a matter of concern to the entire international

community, wherever they take place." He argued that it was clear that individual countries had jurisdiction to try allegations of torture, pointing out that the proposed international criminal court was not yet operating, and that tribunals to try alleged crimes in troubled areas such as Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia were still rare. "There is only one way in which criminal re-

sponsibility can be brought home - that's by prosecution in a national court."

On Wednesday Professor Greenwood cited the international Convention against Torture 1984, incorporated into English law in 1988, as the basis for his argument that there is worldwide jurisdiction for prosecuting torture allegations, and that former heads of state have no immunity. He

also pointed to a long history of judicial decisions which, he argued, demonstrated those principles, including the agreements that established the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal, a 1954 report of the International Law Commission, and the statute of the proposed international criminal court.

More than a hundred of General Pinochet's supporters yesterday gathered near the

rented home on the Wentworth estate in Surrey where he is living under the conditions of his bail and were addressed by his wife, Lucia. Through a loudspeaker she thanked them for coming all the way to Britain to "express personally your belief in the values of freedom and dignity that inspire Chileans".

The lords' hearing continues on Monday.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Thief seen on TV is jailed

A thief who was spotted by his victim six years later on a television show was jailed for two years yesterday.

John Parsons had stolen jewellery and antiques worth £60,000 after offering to help Pamela McMahon, an American businesswoman, to move house in London. She spotted him when he appeared on *This Morning* as a gay rights campaigner and rang the police. Parsons, 44, of Manchester, was found guilty of theft at Southwark Crown Court.

PC found guilty

A police officer was found guilty of indecently assaulting two women. Barry Richardson, 39, of King's Lynn, was given conditional bail by Norwich Crown Court. Sentence was adjourned until February 12.

Retrial ordered

A police photographer was cleared at Preston Crown Court of indecently assaulting two women. Peter Sayward, 43, of Lytham, Lancashire, faces a retrial on a similar charge of taking a full-frontal picture of a female assault victim.

Royal eviction

The Prince of Wales has joined West Country landowners in legal moves to evict travellers from Duchy of Cornwall property. About 20 caravans and 30 vehicles have been parked near Stoke sub Hamdon, Somerset, since October.

Lights out

The beacon at Beachy Head, which has warned shipping for 171 years, has gone out after the recent cliff fall damaged the mains cable. A foghorn has also been cut off. The lighthouse is operating on an emergency lamp.

Trout break out

Trout swam through gardens and along the roads of an estate in Cwmaman, South Wales, after a trout farm flooded in heavy rain and a run-off culvert became blocked. Many of the fish were eventually washed into a river.

Judge discharges juror for using mobile phone

BY FRANCES GIBBS, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A JUROR was discharged by a judge yesterday after he learnt that she had taken a mobile telephone call while deliberating on a case.

The young mother was overheard by an usher making baby-sitting arrangements with her mother, from the adjoining room, where she was trying to reach a verdict on a case involving three men and a woman accused of physical abuse of a mentally handicapped adult at a home.

The jury had already been out for 3½ hours on Wednesday afternoon when the usher went into their room at Exeter Crown Court to tell them that they could be sent home for the night. By law, a jury should be isolated during their deliberations "in a private and convenient place".

Judge Graham Neville, discharging the juror who had sat through eight days of the

trial, told the remaining 11 members of the panel that mobile telephones were an increasing problem for the courts. "I have discharged the lady juror with the mobile phone," he said. "We do not know what to do about mobile phones. People are told not to use them in court, but they are everywhere now, and we cannot take something away from them that is their property. Just ask them not to use it."

"I am sure the juror did not do anything improper, but we have to be on the safe side."

A spokesman for the Lord Chancellor's Department said that courts routinely had signs up saying that mobile telephones should be switched off or, in some cases, handed in.

In March last year, a judge ordered a court reporter to be taken to the cells when his mobile telephone went off in the middle of a trial. In November

1997 a BBC reporter was ordered out of court in South Africa, where he was covering the Earl Spencer divorce case, after his mobile telephone rang.

In yesterday's case, the judge asked the remaining jurors to continue their consideration of the trial involving three care homes in Torrington, Devon.

Donald Lee, 48, denies seven counts of ill-treating one female and three male patients in his guardianship. Diane Baxter, 51, denies two counts of ill-treating two female patients. David Tudor-Poole, 30, denies six counts of ill-treating four female and two male patients. Ivan Rowlands, 52, denies ill-treating one female patient.

The charges followed a joint investigation by police and Devon social services after complaints by relatives.

Warning over gene weapon for ethnic cleansing

BY IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

WEAPONS capable of ethnic cleansing could become a reality within ten years, with the information needed to make them being available on the Internet, the British Medical Association said yesterday.

Current research aimed at developing drugs to cure serious diseases such as cancer, would make it possible to create a "delivery system" for biological weapons able to target specific groups of people with a killer virus, said Sir William Aeschler, chairman of the BMA's board of science. "Science which is being used for benign purposes can be put to malign use."

Vivienne Nathanson, head of ethics at the BMA, said that, as knowledge of human genetic make-up increased, it would be possible to target very specific groups. Height, skin and eye colour were all factors that could be identified and a biological weapon could then be created to harm only people with those genes.

Work on the Human Genome Project, which aims to identify all human genes and map them by 2005, will make it possible to be very specific about what genes make up each individual. It is also now scientifically agreed that "races" do not exist: certain groups merely have higher concentrations of some genes.

Diseases such as cancer are caused by genes that have an abnormal structure. Genetic therapies are being developed that enable drugs to be designed so that they only attack the unhealthy genes. In the treatment a gene is introduced that recognises the unhealthy cells, triggering the release of a virus or poison that destroys the cancer. Healthy cells are left untouched.

The genetic weapon would work in an identical way, recognising victims by their genetic make-up and then releasing a virus that killed them. Dr Nathanson said the information would be available on the Internet and the drugs could be made in small laboratories. Terrorists as well as states could use the technology.

Biotechnology, Weapons and Humanity, BMJ Bookshop, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP, £14.

Recycling clue to evolution

BY NICK NUTTALL

THE mystery of how the elephant developed its trunk, the deer its antlers and the giraffe its neck may have been solved by scientists.

Researchers believe that a tiny genetic trick, common to all animals, can lead to a bewildering array of shapes and forms, from extravagant furs and elaborate shells to the colours of butterflies' wings.

It was previously thought that animals would have need-

ed to evolve new genes, but findings by a team at the University of Madison-Wisconsin indicate that nature simply re-orders genetic circuits in new ways. Their conclusions, in the journal *Science*, come from a study of wing-making genes in fruit flies and two different species of butterfly from North America and East Africa.

They traced the genetic circuitry that governs wing development and colour, and found that genes had been recycled to create new pigmentation by

switching on a new range of enzymes or biological catalysts.

David Keys, a member of the team, said: "Evolution is working by integrating sets of things it already has. You are using a circuit over and over again." Sean Carroll, a molecular biologist and the team's leader, said that the genes used to make spots on butterfly wings were the same as the ones used to develop limbs in animals. The difference was the way in which parts of the gene were switched on.

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CORRECTION

Jack Straw asks us to make clear that he obtained permission for his daughter Charlotte to be away from school on a family holiday (Diary, January 5). Charlotte has passed the age when she is required to attend school compulsorily.

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Harvey 'jumps gun' on Lib Dem rivals

MP accused of ignoring order not to campaign for party leadership until June, reports Jill Sherman

THE campaign for the leadership of the Liberal Democrats began in acrimony yesterday when Nick Harvey, one of the leading contenders, was accused of jumping the starting gun.

All MPs were told by the Chief Whip on Wednesday, after Paddy Ashdown announced that they could not declare as candidates until after the European elections in early June.

But, late on Wednesday night, "friends" of Nick Harvey, the little known campaigner, started talking up his chances and by yesterday it was clear that an unofficial "shadow" campaign team was up and running.

Mr Harvey appeared on Radio 4's Today programme and his friends continued to extol his virtues, insisting that as the least known candidate he needed to raise his profile.

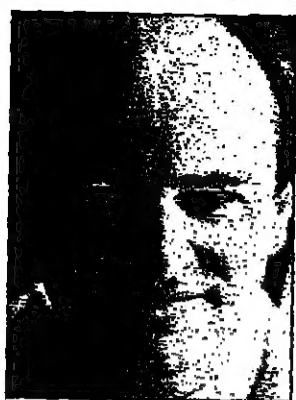
"There is no doubt that Nick Harvey is a serious contender," one said. "He has to make it clear that he has the credentials to be leader when he gets to the point of declaring."

Mr Harvey's friends pointed out his determination to car-

ry on with Paddy Ashdown's policies, continue links with Labour and emphasised, in what was seen as a clear repositioning, that he would accept joining the euro if the economic circumstances were right. Mr Harvey was the only Liberal Democrat MP to vote against the Maastricht treaty. Allies of some of the leading candidates argued that the rule against declaring should be dropped as it was almost impossible not to start campaigning. There were also some grumbles in Scotland against a protracted leadership campaign, with calls for an election before May to stop accusations of a lame-duck leader during the Scottish parliament elections.

Menzies Campbell, the party's foreign affairs spokesman, appeared to pay lip-service to the rules by appearing on television and radio yesterday. There had been reports that Mr Campbell, 57, seen as the elder statesman, might decide not to stand. But yesterday the former Olympic champion said: "I still fancy my chances over 100 yards against any of the parliamentary party."

Mr Campbell said that he



Harvey: shadow campaign team up and running

would be consulting senior colleagues and his constituency, but would abide by the request not to campaign. Some colleagues were surprised at his decision to all but declare himself, but others suggested that he might be testing the water. They pointed out that Mr Campbell would probably only enter the race if he had a good chance of winning, unlike the other candidates who could be putting down markers for future contests.

Charles Kennedy, the front-runner, spent the whole day trying to avoid the cameras. Colleagues pointed out that he had been preparing the ground for a leadership election for some time and had tried to widen his constituency beyond his Scottish seat,

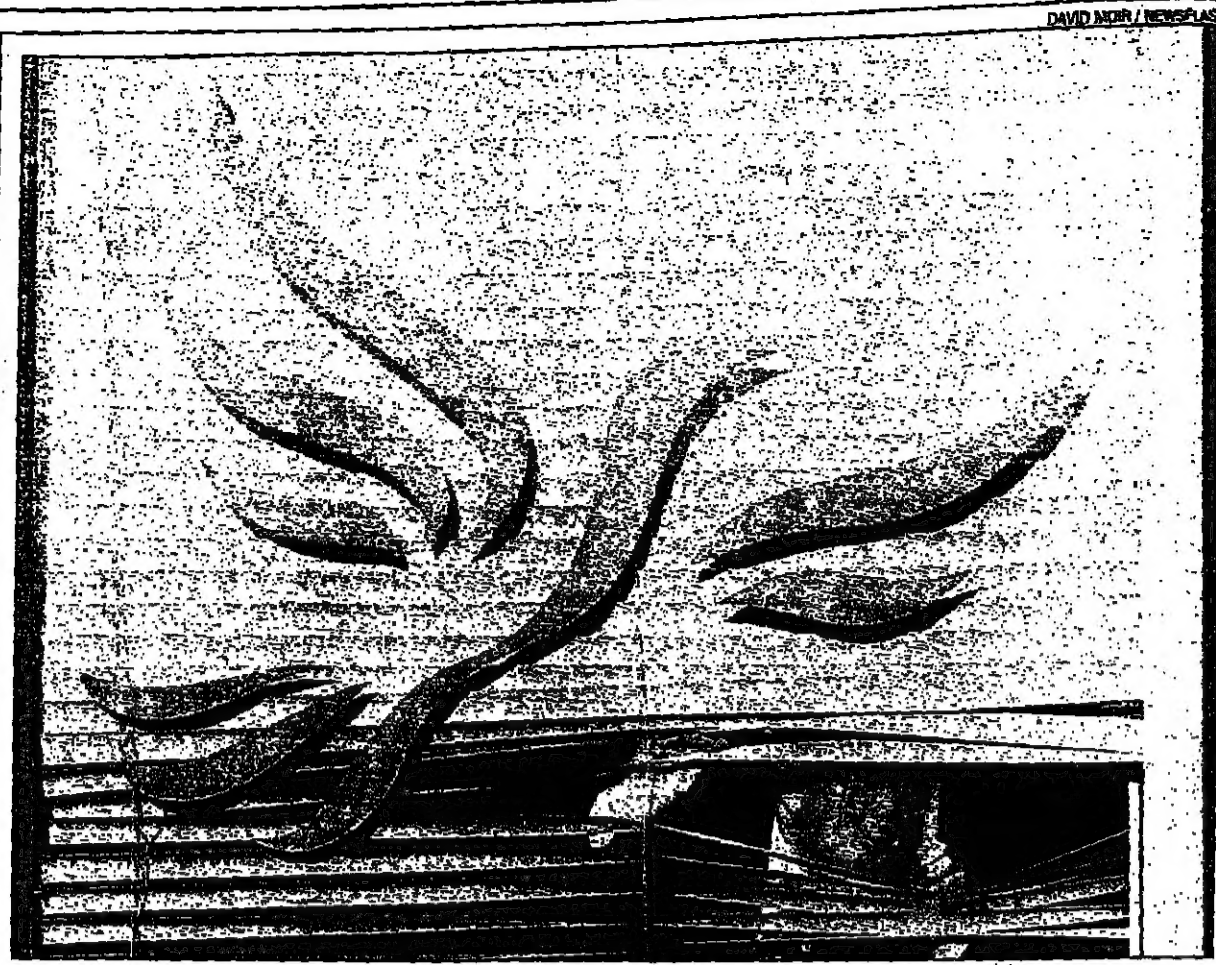
aware that the bulk of party membership is in the South East and South West.

Mr Ashdown also intervened effectively to rule out Simon Hughes, the health spokesman. Mr Hughes was one of two MPs who voted against Mr Ashdown when he announced that he intended to extend links between the Liberal Democrats and Labour.

Mr Ashdown said: "The chances of anybody standing who will succeed who goes against what has been the established democratic will of the party, I don't think is terribly good. But in the end it is for the party to decide."

Mr Hughes refused to be pinned down on whether he would stand, but indicated that he might also be interested in the job of London mayor. "Our party has to make a decision as to who its mayoral candidate is. Fundamentally, at the moment the date for that election is also the summer of this year and I guess that our party would not want the same person to be its mayoral candidate and to be its leader, so read into that what you will," he said. He declined to disclose his future position on Lib-Lab links.

Other potential candidates who refused to rule themselves out yesterday were Don Foster and Malcolm Bruce, though both are considered long shots.



Jim Wallace, Scottish Liberal Democrats leader, after launching their conference agenda in Edinburgh yesterday. He warned leadership contenders against hijacking the Scottish and Welsh election campaigns for their own gain.

Contest risks veering off-course

THE contest for the leadership of the Liberal Democrats is in danger of being fought on a false basis. The media focus so far has been on the attitudes of possible candidates towards the Blair Government. But that is a secondary

issue. The six-month, unofficial and official campaign is likely to tell us very little about Lib-Labbery. The candidates will all stress the importance of an independent party with its distinctive identity and policies. They will play

down, in varying degrees, the advantages of co-operation and of pluralist politics. They will all be running, if not against Tony Blair, then at least to show they can stand up to him.

That is hardly surprising since leadership elections are politics at their most tribal. Moreover, for the next three to four months, local Lib Dems will be indulging in their greatest passion, campaigning for the local, Scottish, Welsh and European elections. In many big northern cities and towns, the Lib Dems are hoping for gains from Labour to offset likely losses in Tory strongholds in the South.

What the candidates say will be little guide to what they do if they become leader. Apart from Simon Hughes, the likely runners all broadly agree on "constructive opposition". They recognise the gains from the talks on constitutional reform. Several MPs, as well as local activists, were worried about

muddle and fiasco two months ago over the expansion of the remit of the Joint Cabinet Committee, particularly the possibility of talks about health and education. This has now been clarified and the principle of co-operation was reaffirmed a week ago with the extension of talks to include European security and defence.

However, joint consultation has probably reached its high point for the Parliament with a slim chance now of a referendum on proportional representation this side of the general election. There are powerful

forces in both parties opposed to closer links and the departure of Paddy Ashdown may make Mr Blair more reluctant to take political risks over relations with the Lib Dems. The Prime Minister respects Menzies Campbell but has little time for many of the other candidates.

Co-operation is likely to continue on the same basis, but there is unlikely to be any big leap forward. The leadership election may have less impact than is commonly assumed.

What really matters is which new leader will help the Lib Dems get most MPs at the next election. How far they can hold their present 46 seats — as well as the size of any Labour majority — will largely determine whether the Lib Dems are big players after the election. Charles Kennedy

has the most obvious appeal to voters as an adept and witty media performer with a shrewd political brain.

But that is a source of suspicion among some activists. Mr Kennedy also has to live down his reputation as a lightweight on policy with a patchy record at Westminster. Some may also question his background in the SDP and wonder whether, post-devolution, a national party leader can come from Scotland.

The Liberal Democrats have a choice: do they want a leader with a possible national appeal or do they want someone who will reinforce the prejudices and interests of local activists? Mr Ashdown's great contribution was to give a national focus and ambitions to a locally rooted party.

Ashdown home to a warm welcome

BY SIMON DE BRUELLES

THE happiest person in Paddy Ashdown's Yeovil constituency yesterday could barely contain his delight at the Lib Dem leader's decision to step down.

Jane Ashdown, his wife of nearly 40 years, grinned as she came to the gate of their home in Norton sub Hamdon. Asked if she was happy, she turned and skipped. More-cambré-and-wiser style, back to her front door.

Mrs Ashdown was one of a small minority in Yeovil. Most of the Somerset town appeared to be in mourning for the man who put it on the map. Mr Ashdown's ties to his constituency were closer than many MPs', despite the extra demands on his time. He held Saturday morning surgeries and continued the doorstep campaigning which in 1983 helped him to prise the seat from the Tory incumbent.

As he made his way back to Somerset last night, Mr Ashdown said: "I just want to say thank you to my constituents: they have been astonishing. They have given me unfailing support all through the 15 years, especially when I was wrong. Now when I get in I will take my shoes off and have a large glass of whisky."

He did not know how much spare time he would have in future. "I don't know if I will be able to just sit around. One of Jane's girlfriends said: 'You have got to keep him away from the cookery books.'"

BY JAMES LANDALE

CHARLES KENNEDY might be the best known Liberal Democrat after Paddy Ashdown but yesterday he broke the habit of a lifetime and spent the day avoiding the media.

The dryden of the broadcasting studios was struck by unusual bashfulness. As his leadership rivals made their presence felt, the frontrunner was noted by his absence.

Journalists stalked the corridors of Westminster. The broadcasters hung their heads in frustration, deprived of that staple of television news: the Kennedy soundbite.

In fact, the MP for Ross, Sney and Inverness West was dealing with constituency work in his Victoria flat. His office insisted that he was not organising a leadership campaign.

At lunchtime, he slipped quietly into the Commons to discuss constituency engagements. Then, a breakthrough. He was forced to vote in the Commons at 3.30pm. He sidled into the lobbies, was spotted by journalists and fled down a corridor.

Tracked down, he said he was not busy campaigning. He was busy voting, taking telephone calls and preparing speeches. All he would say was: "The Liberal Democrats should focus on one thing and one thing alone for the foreseeable future and that's all the local, Scottish, Welsh and European elections."

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Glitter in court on child sex charges



Kosovo peace monitor defies Serb ban

Instead of leaving the country as ordered, William Walker is fighting back, writes Tom Walker in Sipolje

THREAT of the international monitoring mission in Kosovo defied a Serbian government order to leave Yugoslavia yesterday. Instead, he took journalists on a tour of army positions that he said were in breach of the ceasefire.

William Walker, had intended to fly to Belgrade to confront his accusers but, on advice from Wesley Clark, NATO's Supreme Commander, he decided it was too risky. It would have given Yugoslav authorities the chance to deny his presence in the country, a confident Mr Walker believes. He had strong new evidence to back his assertion that Serbian security forces were responsible for the Racak massacre. There was speculation among monitors that incriminating police radio messages may have been picked up during observations of the operation that left 45 ethnic Albanians dead, most with bullet wounds to the head.

Milosevic has pushed himself into a corner, and he suddenly realises he doesn't even have the support of Russia,"

said an aide to the ambassador.

Mr Walker, with 37 years of foreign service and experience of angry Serb minorities from Croatia, must know, however, that he has embarked on a risky course. He was meant to have left Yugoslavia by 5pm, after the authorities had extended his stay by 24 hours, and his office has been inundated with threatening telephone calls from Serbs.

The previous evening, Mr Walker had entertained the international press corps in Pristina, and laughed off suggestions that the event should be called "the last supper".

He said he had the full backing of all 54 nations in the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and had received many letters of support for his defiance of President Milosevic's Yugoslav regime.

"I've had a letter from Kofi Annan, and I guess that kind of represents the world," he said. Afterwards he was forced to leave the restaurant by a back exit as Serb skinheads lingered menacingly in

his car park. The American has a few bodyguards from special forces, but largely relies on Albanian staff for protection. No one in the Pristina OSCE mission is armed.

Mr Walker has remained steadfastly unrepentant since he pinned responsibility for the Racak deaths on the police on Saturday. "I did not blame the Serbs, I blamed the security forces," he told journalists. Asked if the OSCE mission would have been worthwhile if it was closed down, he said: "We have shed some light on what's going on here."

Vuk Draskovic, the former opposition leader now in alliance with Mr Milosevic, was said to have been involved in talks with Russian leaders to find a face-saving deal for the Yugoslav Government that would allow Mr Walker to stay.

A Serbian deputy premier, Tomislav Nikolic, said that because of "diplomatic moves", Mr Walker's departure "will be delayed so that he could be given the chance not to be thrown out but to resign" — ostensibly for health reasons.



William Walker outside a Yugoslav barracks yesterday near the northern town of Podujevo as he took journalists on a tour of army positions

The controversy overshadowed the arrival in the Kosovo capital of Finnish forensic scientists, who began their examinations of the Albanian bodies forcibly removed by police from Racak mosque on Monday. The Finns have portable X-ray machines to study bullet

wounds — equipment that had not been available locally. Helena Ranta, the team leader, said that within ten days, the Racak mystery could be cleared up.

Mr Walker's persistence was matched by that of the police, who continued another

offensive in the north of Kosovo on the outskirts of the industrial town of Mitrovica. The streets of Sipolje village lay deserted as hundreds of officers in battle fatigues pushed back KLA guerrillas in neighbouring Vagadin and settlements to the southwest.

Reporters heard tank shells fired in the morning, and an army anti-aircraft gun was parked in the middle of Sipolje in the afternoon. There were no reports of casualties.

Police appear to have been flushing out a KLA cell they blame for the death of a colleague, and serious injuries to others, a week ago. A CNN camera crew recorded a round-up of male suspects, in an operation bearing troubling similarities to the start of the Racak operation. Few OSCE monitors were in evidence.

US calls for Nato airstrike threat against Milosevic

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR

TH Americans are calling for Nato to issue an ultimatum to President Milosevic to force him to comply with all the demands over Kosovo or face airstrikes.

Although the ultimatum option has not yet been approved by Nato members, a Foreign Office official confirmed that this was now one of the priority topics under discussion at alliance headquarters in Brussels. Nato sources said Washington was not the only alliance member pushing for an ultimatum.

Britain is expected to support the idea, although the Foreign Office official said it would not be practical unless a proper political strategy had been agreed. The ultimatum option will be studied at today's meeting of the six-nation Contact Group in London. However, with Russia opposed to any military action, airstrikes will not be on the Contact Group's agenda.

The Foreign Office official said it would be important to spell out Nato's demands to Belgrade. They would have to include, the official said, complete compliance with the October peace agreement reached with Richard Holbrooke, the American special envoy, including the withdrawal of most of the Serb forces to their barracks, the rescinding of the expul-

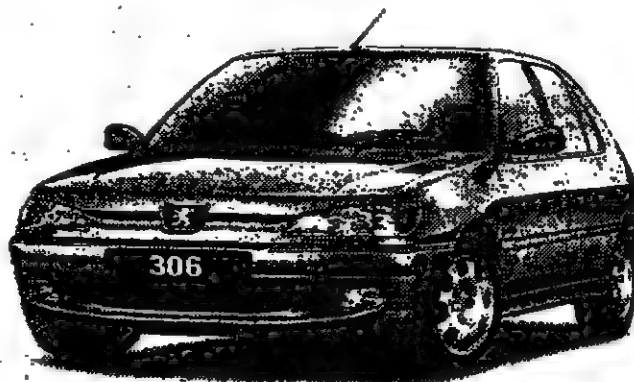
sion order on William Walker, the American head of the verification team in Kosovo, and free access for the war crimes tribunal to investigate last Friday's massacre of 45 Albanians.

A strategy is expected to be drawn up by the end of this weekend that could lead to a formal deadline being imposed on Belgrade next week. A Nato source said: "The alliance wants this resolved peacefully. For that to happen, Mr Milosevic has got to allow an independent investigation of the alleged massacre and that means allowing Judge Louise Arbour, chief prosecutor of the war crimes tribunal in The Hague to head the inquiry."

France yesterday announced that it was sending an aircraft carrier to the Adriatic and redeploying 18 warplanes in response to the Kosovo crisis, and Germany sent eight Tornado fighters to an airbase in Italy to cut response time in case Nato does order a military strike.

Joschka Fischer, Germany's Foreign Minister, however, questioned the wisdom of using force to end the fighting, saying the limits to such tactics had been demonstrated by last month's American offensive in Iraq. "The use of force must be the last possible option," he said.

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Wife without visa is left behind among drug-crazed
killers in Sierra Leone, writes Sam Kiley in Freetown

"I have seen things that you wouldn't even believe in a documentary," said Mr Okulate. The son of a Sierra Leonean and Nigerian couple who emigrated to Britain before he was born, he was orphaned and grew up in care. He married Yegbeh in November last year, but was unable to leave Sierra Leone at Christmas because his bride did not have a visa. His Nigerian name and

British nationality were a potential death sentence when rebels entered the city on January 1.

"It was absolutely terrifying," he said. "They came in saying that they would not hurt anybody, and then they started killing at random. They burnt children to death on the street. They set fire to their homes and then forced them back in. People were shot like chickens.

Passing a Kameajor checkpoint. Mr Magai, an agricultural student who has been wounded four times in battles with the rebels, issued orders: "You find a rebel - no talking, just execute him. Don't let them multiply."

Safely back in a hotel, in Okutale was given water and food, his first for two days. "I am so glad to be out of this," he said. "Many of the rebels were out of their minds on drugs - cocaine and heroin. I don't know where they got it. They parried all the long and killed during the day. These are the most vicious people on earth."

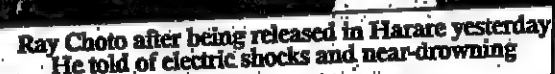
The people around kept me from going out at all because I don't speak Creole and that would have given me away. For five days we just hid in a cellar in a neighbour's house while there was shooting and bombing going on outside."

As he spoke, his Kamajors, savoury eyed groups of young men on street corners and whispered warnings that many were known rebel collaborators. Mr Okulake kissed his wife goodbye and was buried into a jeep as the Kamajors cocked their weapons fearful of ambush.

Given \$300 (£180) by a well-wisher, he then flew to China, where he was met by British officials. His wife joined him when she gets a visa.

Scores of Sierra Leoneans were less fortunate. A payload of 40, all with both hands chopped off by rebels, were driven into Connaught Hospital. Locals said hundreds of rebels were hiding in shacks off the main road — retak by Nigerian soldiers — where they were terrorizing civilians.

Send mercenaries, p. 20



FROM JAN RAATH
IN HARARE

A NEWSPAPER editor and reporter were released from illegal military custody in Zimbabwe yesterday, bearing signs that they had been tortured by military police trying to force them to identify their sources for a report of an al-

Mark Chavunduka, 34, the editor of *The Standard*, and Ray Choto, 36, had bruises on their faces and swollen hands. Mr Choto's hands were about three times their normal size and had burn marks on them. He walked with a limp. A

they left Harare magistrates' court on bail of Z\$10,000 (£155). They appeared to be in the final stages of exhaustion, their eyes badly bloodshot. According to Mr Choto,

brief account as he left the court, he was intensively tortured with half-drowning, electric shocks and beatings for about 21 hours over two days. He said his interrogators told him that President Mujib had signed his death warrant and that he would be tortured until he died. The details came at the end of a ten-day gal battle against the security authorities to release first Mr Chavundanda and then Mr

Photo. They were illegally detained after their report last week that 23 soldiers had been arrested in December for inciting a coup.

Their interrogation, case with which military authorities secured the collusion of other branches of the Government and their confidence of High Court.

dismissal of high court judges, establishes an alarm in a new direction in a country seized by economic crisis: widespread resentment of the Mugabe regime.

The violent reaction to *Standard* report is seen as indication that Mr Mugabe sees an attempted military coup as a real threat. With

es have reported heavy-armed troops guarding the gates of army headquarters, and a significant increase in the number of sentries in combat uniform guarding Mr Ncube's residence.

Mr Chavunduka spent 10 days in illegal military detention. Mr Choto had been hiding from military police until Tuesday, when he went himself up to police. He handed the pair over to military police, who drove the blindfolded journalists to what is believed to be a secret police interrogation centre at Goromonzi, about 35 miles east of Harare.

Mr Choto said he has his head rammed into a bucket of water to the point of drowning, and was allowed momentarily to gasp for air, or to be forced back into the water again. He was given electric shocks all over, including his genitals. Both men said they had managed to protect themselves.

Military police reined them to Harare police on Wednesday. The pair appeared before a magistrate yesterday, charged with causing alarm, fear and discontent, and are due to appear again on February 22.

Leading article, p. 2

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Italians launch attack on Nelson

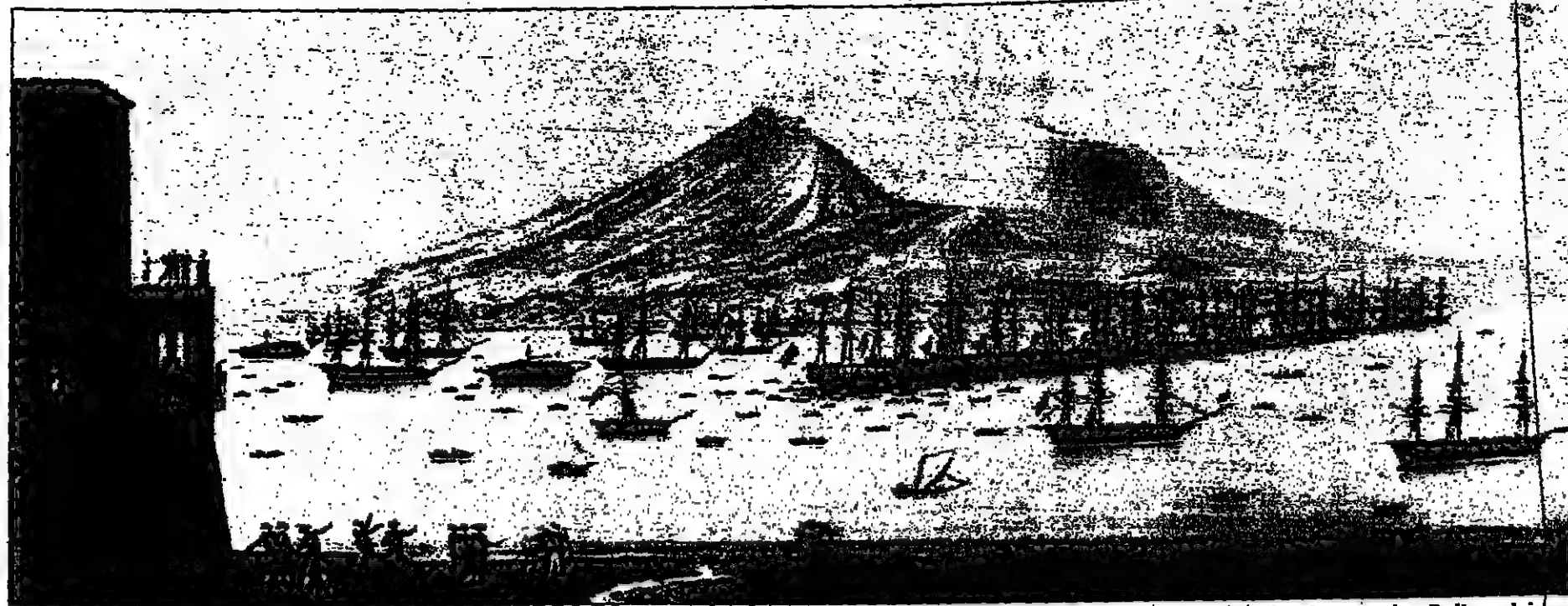
'Brutal' British hero slaughtered rebels, writes Richard Owen in Rome

LORD NELSON was criticised yesterday by Italian historians, who branded him a war criminal who had used "brutal, bloodthirsty methods" to put down a revolt in Naples 200 years ago.

But British scholars defended the hero of Trafalgar, saying that his actions in Naples had to be understood "in the context of wider British strategic interests". Professor John Davis, who is writing an account of revolutionary Naples for Oxford University Press, said he understood Italian attitudes, but "anti-British sentiment" was misplaced.

At a three-day conference on the Jacobin revolution against the Bourbon rulers of Naples in 1799, Professor Gerardo Marotta, director of the Italian Institute of Philosophical Studies in Naples, said that it was time that Nelson's true role in executing the leaders of the revolt was "fully exposed".

Nelson had acted with great brutality, Professor Marotta, who describes himself as the last of the Neapolitan Jacobins, said. He added that Nelson had played a leading role in restoring the Bourbons, ending the 144-day republic by reneging on promises of safe conduct and engaging in "shame-



Nelson's fleet in the Bay of Naples in 1799. Controversy rages over his role in helping to put down an anti-monarchist uprising, tarnishing his heroic reputation, Italians claim.

ful wholesale slaughter" of the revolutionaries.

Nelson arrived in Naples in 1793 with orders to help to forge an anti-French pact with King Ferdinand I and Queen Maria Carolina, the Bourbon monarchs. His Naples years are perhaps best remembered for his passionate affair with Emma Hamilton, wife of Sir William Hamilton, the British Ambassador. But Nelson also played a key political role: he supported the King and Queen when the French invaded early in 1799 and encouraged anti-monarchist forces

(led by disaffected noblemen) to stage a revolt.

Nelson took King Ferdinand and Queen Maria Carolina to safety in Palermo in his own flagship, and returned later to help monarchist forces led by Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo to put down the uprising.

The conference, which is part of bicentenary celebrations marking the revolt, is being held at the Castel Sant'Elmo, the fortress on a hill above Naples where the routed revolutionaries took refuge. Professor Davis, formerly Professor of History at War-

wick University and now at Connecticut University, said that there was particular anger over the fact that the defeated rebels were enticed out of the fortress after being assured they would be given safe passage. "But Nelson did not feel bound by this and had them arrested the moment they emerged defenceless," he said.

Anti-Nelson feeling focuses on the fate of Admiral Francesco Caracciolo, who had served the monarchy but switched sides to back the rebels. He was sentenced to life imprisonment after a court martial held on Nelson's orders.

Nelson changed the sentence to death by hanging from the yardarm and refused to allow the body to be taken down until sunset. It was thrown into the sea, weighted with cannon balls. The corpse was buried after being washed up on a beach. According to some scholars, Nelson's dislike of the admiral was fuelled not only by his treachery but also by the fact that he had once slighted Lady Hamilton by refusing to dance with her. Giuseppe Galasso, a lead-

ing Naples historian, said that Queen Maria Carolina had written to Lady Hamilton from Palermo asking her to tell Nelson to put down the revolt "as if he were crushing a rebel city in Ireland".

"He didn't need to be asked twice," Professor Galasso said. "The result has left an indelible stain on the reputation of a man whom the British regard as a hero."

Professor Davis said that he had read all of Nelson's correspondence at the time of the revolt and "I don't think he had a very clear idea of what he

was getting into in terms of the internal politics of the Bourbon kingdom. He was a naval officer of his time, with a strong sense of discipline and a firm reaction to any form of insubordination."

Professor Davis said it was true that Nelson had taken his word over safe passage for the rebels, but the pious year he had won a famous victory over French forces at the Battle of the Nile. In Naples he was guided by the broader interest of obstructing the ambitions of Napoleon Bonaparte in the Mediterranean.

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Japan telescope focuses on infant universe

FROM ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO

JAPANESE scientists say that a new infra-red telescope, the biggest yet built, could help to solve the mystery of how life was created.

The £210 million telescope will give scientists the best view so far of the universe in its infancy, according to Motohide Tamura of Japan's National Astronomical Observatory. "What is most exciting is that we expect to be able to observe the birth of newly born galaxies," he said.

Called Subaru after the Japanese word for the star cluster

Pleiades, the telescope's large size was made possible by technological innovations. At its heart is an American-made reflector with a diameter of 8.2m (27ft), supported by Japanese computer-controlled arms to compensate for gravity and temperature variations. The system ensures that the flexible mirror — only 20cm (8in) thick — preserves a curvature of staggering precision. If sited in London, the telescope could pinpoint and measure precisely a tennis ball in Swindon.

The telescope, equipped with a highly accurate tracking system, will be able to lo-

cate stars in both the visible and infra-red wavelengths, greatly extending the limits of the observable universe.

Scientists in Japan say the Subaru will out-perform America's Hubble telescope —

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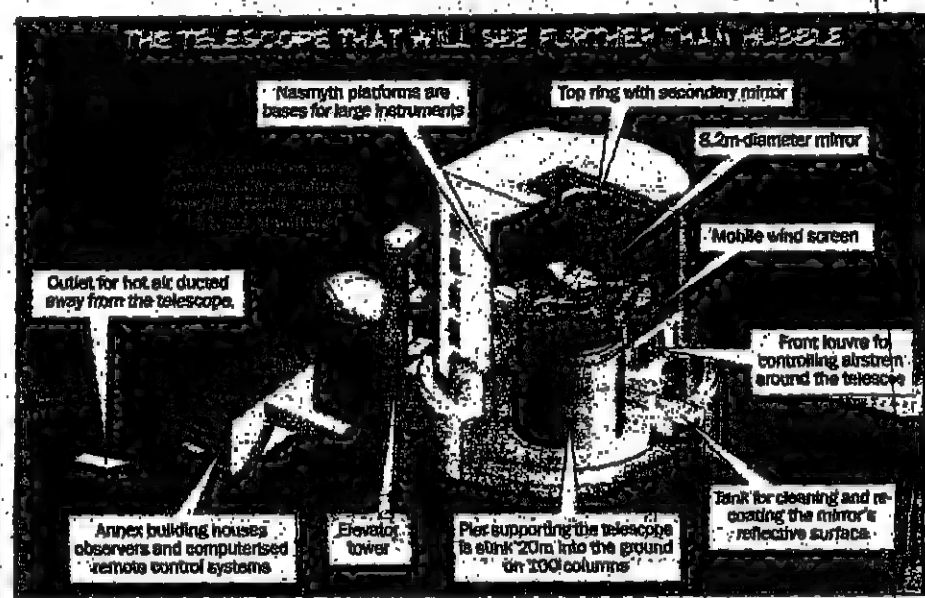
www.subaru-telescope.jp — home page of the Subaru telescope.
www.com/mise/hubble_sites.html — links to Hubble space telescope sites.
seti.stsci.edu/~mitchner/HST-model.html — how to make a model of the Hubble Telescope.

though this has the advantage of being above the Earth's atmosphere — because it can collect more light than the space telescope. Hubble has been able to confirm hundreds of previously unknown galaxies with its reach of about ten billion light years. Subaru will be capable of focusing up to 12 billion light years away.

Professor Tamura says it will also enable scientists to observe directly planetary systems outside the solar system — the existence of which was discovered in 1995. "Until 1995 we did not know of any planetary system outside our solar system," the professor said.

"But in 1995 the first example of the extrasolar planet was discovered. The next step is somehow to observe directly those kind of extrasolar planets."

Scientists are also excited by the prospect of detecting the first generation of celestial objects which cooled from the primordial gas, which are predicted to be galaxies in their initial star-forming phase. "We will not be able to see the beginnings of the universe itself, which may be 15 billion light years away, or 20 billion. But now we hope to be able to observe the infant universe," Professor Tamura said.



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THE SUNDAY TIMES

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THE SUNDAY TIMES / THE SUNDAY PAPERS



Duff wants \$50,000 a month child support

'Cheap billionaire' feeds his daughter on \$3 a day

THE chairman of Revlon cosmetics, Ronald Perelman, was chided yesterday for being New York's cheapest billionaire after saying that he can feed his four-year-old daughter for \$3 (£1.52) a day.

The remark came in exchanges during a contentious court hearing to decide how much Mr Perelman, 55, should pay in child support to his third former wife, Patricia Duff, 44, a wealthy socialite, to whom he was married for 18 months. As Judge Franklin

Weissberg remarked: "We're in uncharted waters here. There aren't too many cases where a billionaire and a multimillionaire slug it out."

Indeed, the hearing was just the kind of clash enjoyed by New York's tabloid media. "It won't take a lotta bread to feed my kid," blared a headline in the New York Post, which also coined the "cheapest billionaire" comment.

Jim Haggerty, a spokesman for Ms Duff, added his two cents' worth by saying: "Ron

Multimillionaires end up quibbling over cents, writes Ian Brodie

Perelman lives like the Sultan of Brunei and has the nerve to quibble about how much he should support his child."

Mr Perelman, one of America's richest men, agreed that his worth was "approximately \$6 billion". He described a life of private jet, yachts, luxury holidays and a string of lavish homes and estates from Man-

hattan to Long Island, Palm Beach and Los Angeles.

Yet when his daughter, 4, comes to say with him, Mr Perelman said in evidence, she eats \$3 worth of food a day: chicken fingers, hot dogs, cereal for breakfast, hamburgers and some pasta.

"Three dollars? So about \$1,000 a year would be appro-

priate?" asked William Beslow, Ms Duff's lawyer. "Yes," Mr Perelman replied.

Figures from the US Department of Agriculture show that \$3.07 a day was the national average last year for a "low-cost" home-cooked food plan for a four-year-old. Mr Perelman has a full-time chef on his staff. Ms Duff is seeking \$50,000 a month in child support, including \$40,000 to rent a New York flat, a second car, \$60,000 a year for a nanny, extra household help and cash

for holidays. She also wants Mr Perelman to continue paying for the girl's school and medical insurance.

Mr Perelman is paying \$12,000 a month in child support plus \$1.5 million a year in maintenance to Ms Duff.

Mr Perelman amassed his fortune partly through takeover battles. He was a bit player in the Monica Lewinsky scandal: she was offered a Revlon job after Mr Perelman was contacted by Vernon Jordan, the President's friend.



Perelman: 'lives like Sultan of Brunei'

Senate veteran goes into battle for friend Bill

By BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Clinton called on an old Arkansas friend yesterday to mount the last, impassioned speech for his defence, as the White House team ditched its low-key approach, and cranked up emotion and rhetoric for a final attack. Dale Bumpers, 73, like Mr Clinton a former Governor of Arkansas, and a senator for 24 years, arrived on Capitol Hill yesterday to do battle for his friend and protégé.

Yesterday marked the anniversary of the start of the Lewinsky scandal, when accounts of the President's friendship with the young trainee first broke, adding to the nation's favourite catchphrase lines such as "Sir, the girl is here with the pizza". But after a year of tortuous drama, the President's fate could be settled as early as Monday, when Democrats want to hold a blunt "Yes" or "No" vote on whether to scrap the trial on the two articles of impeachment against Mr Clinton.

Expectations are that Republicans, who hold a 55-45 advantage in the Senate, would squash that bid. But with Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott pressing to wrap up the trial by mid-February, there is a widespread sense that Republicans are losing their appetite for stretching it out in delay.

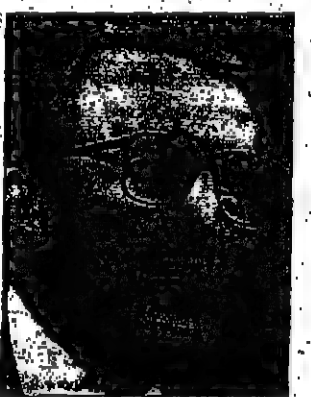
ing Mr Bumpers to close the President's case, the White House pitched straight at the public's lack of enthusiasm for a long trial. Folly but civilised, an old-fashioned liberal Democrat but also a tough, trained lawyer with a love of a courtroom brawl, Mr Bumpers can be relied on to deliver a powerful, populist speech. A huge, white-haired man, with a booming voice, he is hard to ignore.

A much-loved figure in the Senate, Mr Bumpers became a political star when he dislodged the famous Orval Faubus in running for Governor, and then ousted the distinguished, William Fulbright,

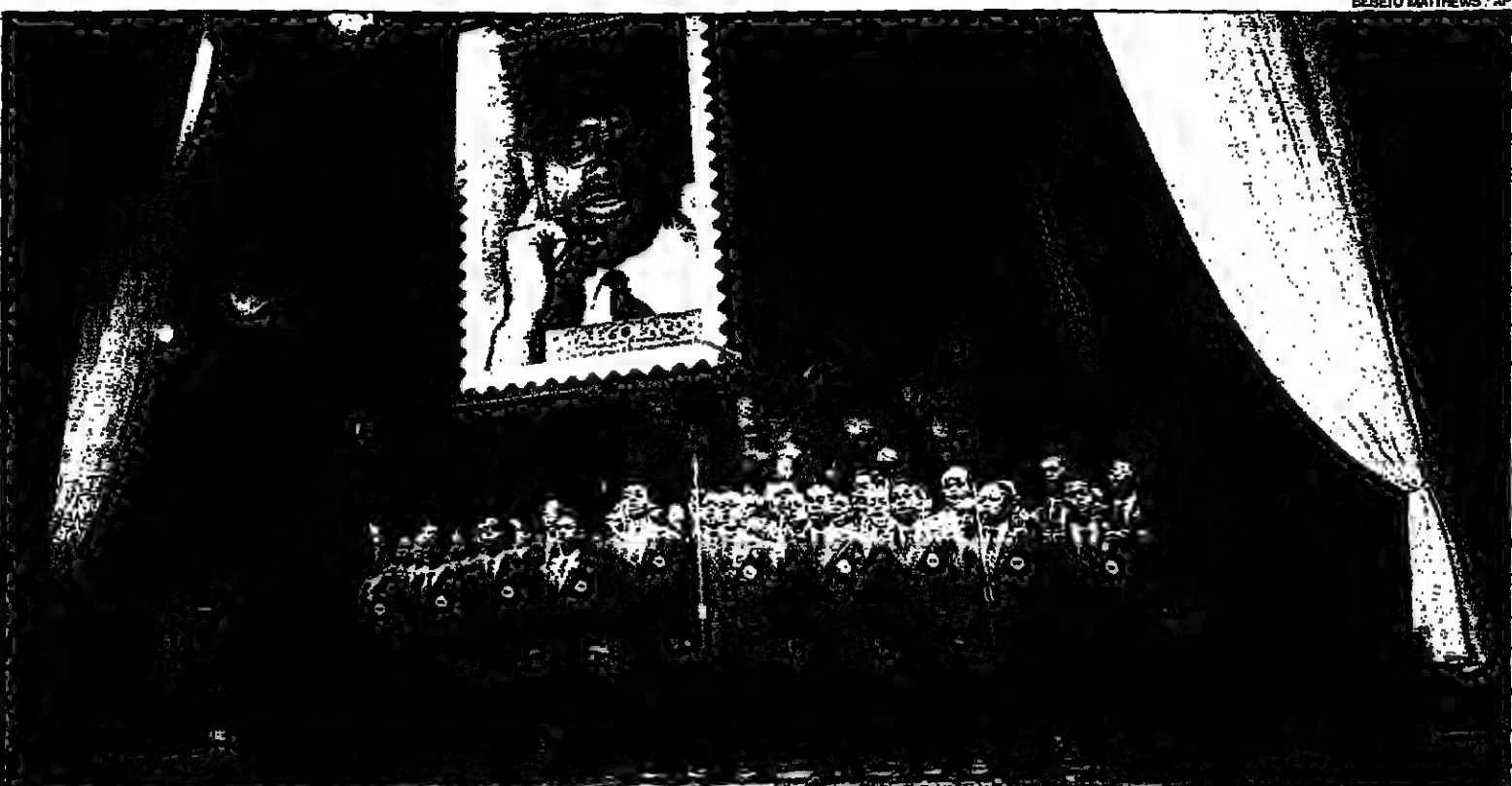
one of Mr Clinton's political mentors, from his Senate seat. But he won many friends on the other side of the aisle during his tenure. Asa Hutchinson, a Republican Representative for Arkansas, and a member of the House team prosecuting Mr Clinton, described him this week with approval as "excellent — just an old country lawyer".

In Mr Clinton's defence, deputy White House counsel Cheryl Mills, 33, the first woman to take the floor in the trial, said the prosecution was wrong to focus on whether the President had lied in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case, because the House had thrown out that charge against him. Ms Mills is seen as strengthening Mr Clinton's already formidable appeal to women. She appealed to senators to overlook Mr Clinton's flaws. "We've had imperfect leaders in the past, and we'll have imperfect leaders in the future," she said, but their imperfections did not stop "the march for civil rights and equal opportunity".

New polls show that the President's job approval ratings following his State of the Union speech on Tuesday are near their all-time high-point — up to 76 per cent in one survey.



Bumpers: folksy liberal and tough lawyer



The Boys Choir of Harlem at the dedication of a postage stamp honouring Malcolm X, the assassinated black nationalist leader. The guests at the presentation in the Apollo Theatre, Harlem, included his six daughters. The 33-cent stamp is the 22nd in the Black Heritage series

'Son of Star Wars' targets rogue states' missiles

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

IN A major shift of American policy, the Clinton Administration has decided to develop a "Son of Star Wars" defence against missile attacks by North Korea and other rogue nations.

President Clinton has written to President Yeltsin asking to renegotiate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, a bedrock of early arms control agreements, so that America can build a limited national system of missile defences.

Initial reaction from Moscow was discouraging. China also raised objections. But in Washington, William

Cohen, the Secretary of Defence, said that if Russia would not agree to changes, America had the option of simply withdrawing from the treaty on six months' notice.

The Administration will request \$10.5 billion (£6.4 billion) from Congress over the next six years for the research, testing and building of the new anti-missile defence system. "We cannot afford to fail," Mr Cohen said. Washington's concerns were aroused initially by a government commission that issued a warning of the rapid spread of missile technology to such countries as North Korea, Iraq and Iran.

The caution was underlined dramatically last August when North Korea launched a three-stage rocket called Taepo-Dong I that demonstrated a potential for reaching the US mainland. "This is not an abstract, theoretical threat," said the Pentagon's top officer, General Hugh Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Rather, it was a real threat that would pose a danger not only to American troops overseas, but also to Americans at home.

In 1983, former President Reagan launched his Star Wars programme to build a national shield against Soviet missile attack. The project cost \$40 billion but never came close to reality.

The concept of dozens of missiles in space that could instantly intercept Soviet ICBMs was a technical and software challenge that American scientists could not track. The new plan is modest by comparison. It envisages satellite sensors to spot the exhaust of hostile missile launches immediately after lift-off, but the interceptors will be based on Earth, not in space.

The network of early-warning radars — in Alaska, California and Massachusetts — would track the flight path of any incoming missile. Interceptors travelling at 25,000mph would home in on the missile and destroy it by firing small rockets.

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SAVON, £3.95
Elegant, traditional packaging. Lathers well and leaves hands clean and moisturised. The only drawback is that it smells like Fairy Liquid. L'Occitane (mail order 0171-290 1421) 7/10



CITRUS, £4.50
Beautiful blue glass bottle with an awkward plastic dispenser. Clear, thick and very effective, turning into frothy bubbles. Leaves hands soft with a faint tang of lemon oil. Neals Yard, 15 Neals Yard, WC2 (0171-627 1949) 9/10



FINE LIQUID, £3.50
Thick, honey-coloured liquid in a smart pump-action bottle. With a grapefruit scent, it cleanses effectively and does not leave hands sticky or dry. Molton Brown, 58 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-499 6474) 10/10



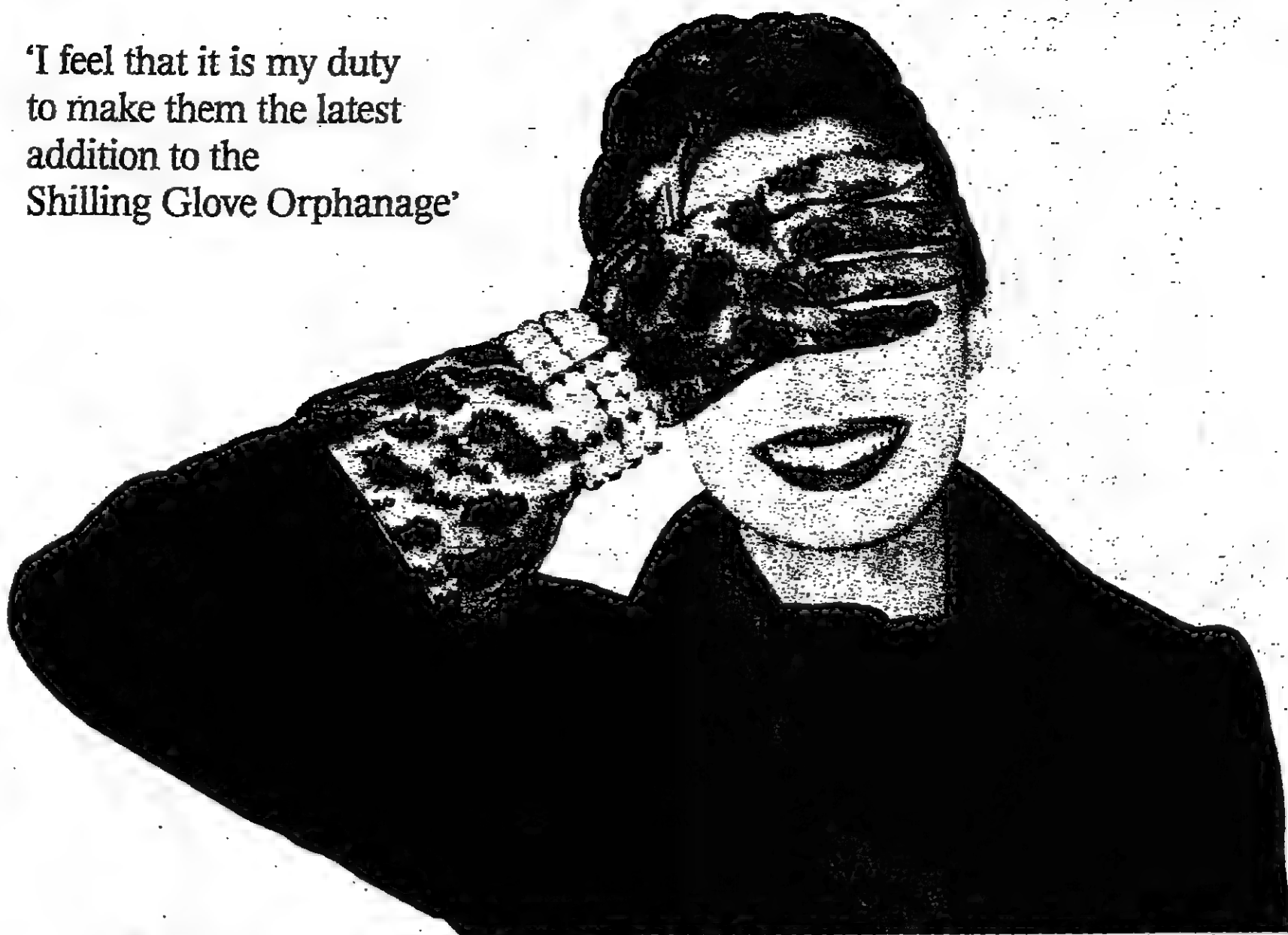
COOKS, £6.50
Excellent — lovely fresh cucumber perfume. Only a little needed to form a good lather. Looks good on the kitchen draining board. Thoroughly recommended. At Crabtree & Evelyn nationwide from March (0171-603 1811) 9/10



COLOUR ESSENTIALS CLEAN HANDS, £1.50
Gorgeous colour with strong medicinal smell. Lathers well — very little needed — leaves hands clean but not dry. Marks & Spencer nationwide (0171-935 4422) 8/10

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In love with gloves

Every so often I wonder what sort of life a Martian might think I led were one to land his spaceship on my roof and take a look in my top drawer. There he would find a collection of lace, ribbon and enamel buttons, lengths of veiling sprinkled with velvet bows, and elbow-length white kid gloves sufficient to keep an entire ballroom-full of Edwardian debutantes and their dowager mamas supplied for years on end.

I know that there are women — some of them are my best friends — who don't care for this kind of pretty trash. It's not just that they don't feel the need for it. They actively

CUTTING EDGE

JANE SHILLING

dislike it. The sight of a faded kid glove lovingly entwined with a necklace of paste brilliants and a scrap of cherry-red silk-velvet ribbon speaks to them not of Chopin nocturnes and Chekhovian melancholy but of dinner, woolly thinking and bad feng shui. Even I, in one of my periodic fits of minimalism, have been known to tip the contents of

this drawer on to my bed with a view to returning the whole lot to the Oxfam shop from which it mostly came. Somehow this resolution is never carried out. Something stays my hand. But what is it?

Partly it is a sense of history. That pair of superfine milk-chocolate suede gauntlets, marked on the inside wrist in spidery copperplate 'Made in France, size 6½' — through what adventures did they pass, before ending up in the dusty old gloves' home of a London charity shop? Whose little hand fleshed out the narrow, pointed fingers of those powder-pink, full-length evening gloves with their elegant white piping, fiddly pearl buttons and laim, melancholy scent of mothballs? They are gloves to go dancing in. They must have been worn while love affairs began and ended, proposals were made and rejected. Or perhaps they belonged to a girl who hated dances and sat in the cloakroom all evening fiddling with those pink-pearl buttons until she could escape.

I am so hopelessly in thrall to the pathetic fallacy that in shops where gloves are sold I find myself attributing personalities to the merchandise and feeling that it is my duty to take home such and such a pair — as though I were Mira Farrow and the gloves a gaggle of Vietnamese orphans.

In these circumstances, the best thing to do is to keep away from glove shops altogether — especially the King's Road, a particular danger zone, with Brora (where luxurious cashmere gloves are now reduced to £10) at one end, and at the other Peter Jones, whose repertoire encompasses a vast range, from dove-grey sheepskin mittens, £12.95, to shocking-pink kid lined with silk, £29.50, and fine black suede elegantly ruched at the wrist, £35. Convinced that a hard winter lies ahead, I found myself lingering over hand-stitched charcoal lambskin with a pale grey lining, £35, tan lambskin with a cream fur cuff, £45, black Italian leather gauntlets lined with rabbit fur, £35, and cashmere-lined black suede with a tortoiseshell buckle, £35.

At Harvey Nichols the selection is smaller but wilder, with black glimmer chenille by Dents,

£12.95, and a handsome pair of three-quarter-length silk-lined black nappa leather gloves, £60. There is an exuberant range of designs by Moschino, from relatively sedate knitted styles in fringed black mohair, £34.95, and orchid-pink scalloped cuff, £33.95, to *fin de siècle* elegance — a black suede gauntlet with a jet-beaded cuff, £95 — and an extravagant pair of heart-on-hand styles, in black kid with white top-stitching and a bright red heart motif, £75, or zebra-striped, ponyskin 'with the same red heart', £95.

At this level, gloves begin to cross the boundary between garment and objet d'art. Those from Hermès fall firmly into the latter category, particularly the white kid summer glove with a little linen handkerchief tucked into its cuff, and the child's berry-red sheepskin mitten, gaily embroidered with golden trumpets and musical notes — an article so enticing that only the humiliating prospect of a Cinderella-style struggle to force my adult hand into its infantile contours prevented me from making it the latest addition to the Shilling Glove Orphanage.



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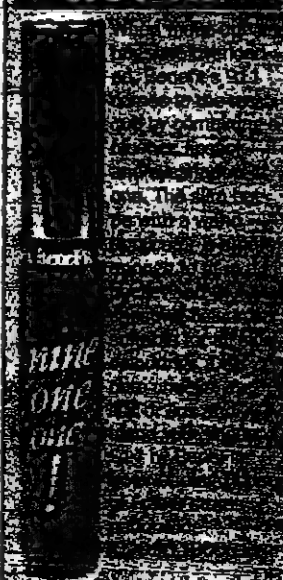
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The secret world of an embassy wife

No one suspected that Catherine Manning, for more than 20 years the perfect diplomatic hostess, was leading a double life.

Interview by Grace Bradberry

Catherine Manning, the wife of David Manning, until recently Ambassador to Israel, is that rare thing, a diplomatic wife happy to live in her husband's shadow. She has done it for 24 years now, apparently without complaint. But then, Catherine Manning has a dark and thrilling secret: she is an award-winning crime writer.

For 15 years, she kept this other life to herself. When in England, she would occasionally attend crime-writers' dinners, introducing herself by her nom de plume, Elizabeth Ironside. When on the diplomatic circuit, she would be queen of the canapés, mistress of the official crockery — "an English porcelain, white with a gold crest on it," she says, in her soft, trilling voice.

It was in Israel that this carefully structured plot unravelled. "I was still trying both to write and to be the Ambassador's wife, and I threw on a dress and went to a dinner. A woman asked me what I did. Eventually I told her. She said: 'Oh, I knew you were very busy because of the state of your hands.' She'd noticed that they hadn't been manicured. Of course, she had beautifully manicured nails."

Yet Catherine Manning is the sort of woman who would always look "well turned-out". We meet in a sparse, cream flat, within a grandiose apartment block in South London. Inside the vestibule, the stucco work has been restored. In short, it's oddly like an embassy. Manning does not disguise the setting. She looks as if she might have been born in a cashmere sweater similar to the one she is wearing.

Appearances are deceptive. The Mannings are renting, until the tenants move out of their Chelsea home — her husband was posted back to London slightly earlier than expected. And far from being born to this kind of life, Catherine grew up in a Northamptonshire village, where her mother was a social worker and her father a GP. "It was a Manchester Guardian-reading household," she says.

Her father died while she was in her teens and the family endured straitened circumstances. Educated at a grammar school, she went up to Oxford aged only 17. There she met her husband, went to lots of parties, and formed no idea of what she wanted to do next. At the age of 23, she married and, since David Manning had joined the Foreign Office, this answered the question.

"The moment we decided to get married, I did a teaching qualification," because thought it would be useful. "This was her only career plan. The first posting was Warsaw, in the mid-Seventies. Her husband learnt to speak Polish, she managed only a little. 'I think I was really miserable and the thing that saved me was meeting a Polish historian who was writing a book on Conrad. I became a sort of literary assistant.'"

So, as her husband concentrated on his first posting, she found other intellectual diversions. "That's been true in every job he's been in — his focus has been different from mine. He was thinking in political or economic terms, whereas I was thinking in human terms."

Traditionally, diplomatic wives have found a focus in



Catherine Manning: all the attributes of the ideal ambassador's wife — plus a talent for concealment and crime writing

their children. But as other wives felt pregnant, for Catherine that didn't happen.

"I couldn't have children," she says, carefully. "It was a source of regret and, for a time, of real sadness. But you can't spend your whole life regretting one condition. I went

through it and came out at the other side, and left that particular thing behind."

She began writing her first novel, set in India (her husband's second foreign posting), when she was 30. "We just bought a house and we were completely broke," she

says. "But I did it partly to pass the time, too." Her husband parcelled up the manuscript and sent it to an agent, picked from the *Artists' and Writers' Yearbook* for no other reason than that the surname began with A. The agent quickly placed the book, and *A Very*

Private Enterprise won the Crime Writers' Association first novel award.

Had she turned to writing to fill a void? "It might be that I started to write at a moment when really I should have..." she begins. "I mean, I'd been married long enough... it

was quite clear that if I was going to have children, then I should have had them by then, and I wasn't going to."

One has to admire a woman who could respond to such a crushing discovery by becoming an award-winning novelist. During her husband's third posting — to Paris — she also polished off a history dissertation. Not the least formidable, and, frankly, rather shy, she is the kind of resourceful wife that Foreign Office mandarins must adore. "David is always very dedicated to his work," she says. "Which means you could spend your time twiddling your thumbs — or you could do something yourself."

The Mannings were in Moscow from 1990 to 1993. It was a scary period, though not, apparently for Catherine Manning. "They were the best years there since 1917," she says with a glee. "During August 1991, when the coup took place, I walked every day with my dog down to the barricades."

They lived in a rented house with "a KGB man on the door who noted every time one went in and out." Later, people were so concerned about security they would beg to have a policeman outside their door.

During this period she wrote her second novel, *Death in the Garden*, which was shortlisted for the Crime Writers' Association Gold Dagger award. Back in England, she completed her third, *The Accomplice*, mostly about Russia. Naively, she thought that her first stint as an ambassador's wife and that of a spy would provide her with material for a novel.

"I ought to have known better, but I started out thinking: 'This is wonderful. I'm going to an interesting country, to live in a lovely house, and

there are staff. I shall work during the day, and give receptions in the evening.' Officially, there was no reason she should not have approached it in this way. 'The Foreign Office is now absolutely politically correct on this. There is no pressure on wives to do anything connected with their husbands' jobs. That's the theory. The practice for ambassadors' wives is very different.'"

It was wonderful, she says, to meet the key political players in Israel. (Though she confesses: "To tell you the truth, Israel is a country without small talk.") But her writing suffered. Finally, she decided to retreat to their house in France for six months each year, where she wrote her latest novel, *The Art of Deception*, a tale of money-laundering and murder set in Moscow and Knightsbridge.

In truth, there seems to be a part of Catherine Manning which enjoys if not deception, then secrecy and subterfuge. She clearly rather enjoyed having two lives. Then her publishers pointed out that, in today's world, merely writing books was not enough. You had to publicise them.

"I'd never had a launch party until I went to Israel. People just assume you're an ambassador's wife and that's it. It didn't bother me. But while we were in Israel, David gave a party for *The Accomplice*. He did it as a private person, and had invitations printed from David Manning, for the launch of Elizabeth Ironside's book. Lots of people came and realised that was me only when they arrived." She counts this with the relish of a spy whose cover was never blown.

● *The Art of Deception*, by Elizabeth Ironside, New English Library, £5.99.

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THE TIMES SCIENTISTS FOR THE NEW CENTURY

In the first of a new series of lectures starting on Wednesday January 27, Dr Martin Westwell, a young chemist from Oxford University, will describe the war against superbugs. As well as explaining how antibiotics work, he will discuss the frightening prospect that, for the first time in the history of medicine, we have no weapons with which to fight the most deadly infections.

The talk will be introduced by Professor Susari Greenfield, director of the Royal Institution. There will be the opportunity for questions from the audience.

The lecture will be held at 7.30pm at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1X 4BS.

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Starters for No 10

Many people think that just because Tony Blair promised his constituents, in Sedgefield that his favourite dish is takeaway fish and chips, but has now also told compilers of *The Stinging Cookbook* that he likes nothing better than "fresh fettuccine garnished with an exotic sauce of olive oil, sun-dried tomatoes and capers", then he must be some kind of shameless chameleon who changes to woo whomever he happens to be with. Well, that's certainly what I think.

But this culinary misunderstanding has made Blair anxious about his image.

Or, as he put it to Frank Bruno at a Downing Street cocktail party last night: "They're trying to stitch me up good 'n' proppa, ain't it? Frankie, makin' me out to be a Zelig of the food world, like in that Woody Allen movie, know 'wo' I mean, Harry?" before turning with his other face to Michael Caine, from whom he sought some moral support by pleading: "Mike, you know me mate. I'm jiss murr 'n' dad — mail — about me fish 'n' chips. But not a lotta people know 'at."

But Tony understands that the days when people changed the way they spoke simply in order to blend in with whomever they were talking to are, like, so five minutes ago. That was last year's political fashion, which Tony flaunted so flamboyantly on the *Des O'Connor Show* last June, when he told us all how he loves to play footie with "the kids" and how, on a hot day in France, "they put on a little show for us, with the mayor of the little village."

Then Blair got a pager message from Alastair Campbell explaining that everyone speaks Estuary English now, and the latest focus group findings showed that "you are what you eat" was the new mantra on voters' lips.

This is why — whereas an American President might be followed around a crowded room by a pair of discreet bodyguards — Tony Blair, at his Downing Street cocktail parties, is accompanied by a pair of discreet waitresses.

One carries a tray of food, the other a tray of

drinks. Approaching John Prescott, say, Tony grabs himself a half of Tetley's and a cheese-and-pickle bap. As he moves on to Kate Moss, Tony's already nibbling on a rocket leaf and sipping vodka and cranberry juice, swiftly swapping these for an asparagus quiche tartlet and a Malibu and blackcurrant when it's time to get the lockdown on the world of showbiz from *Supermarket Sweep's* Dale Winton.

Because of his hectic lifestyle, Blair now employs a full-time social dietician to orchestrate his schedule in a way that enables him to blend in gastronomically with whomever he happens to be dining. If you would like to try the Blair diet as part of your new year makeover, here are a few examples of what Tony eats, and in whose company:

Paddy Ashdown: With Paddy, Tony makes a point of eating neither fish nor fowl, but something in between. Like Ashdown, Tony has this week vowed to hand over the responsibility of eating food to someone else — but not for six months!

Mike Tyson: Tony likes to take a bite out of Mike's ear. Peter Mandelson: Tony tends to choose lobster, making sure the restaurant bill is sent to Geoffrey Robinson.

John Humphrys: Blair often joins the *Today* presenter in eating a Cabinet minister for breakfast.

Robin Cook: The evening frequently ends with the two of them rolling around the floor of Chevening's drawing room, empty brandy bottles scattered about them like bowling pins.

David Owen: Anything, as long as it's between 9am and 11.30am, or 5pm to 7pm.

Richard Rogers: Tony orders seabass — just so long as all the bones have been repositioned on the outside of the fish, and the whole dish is served under a spectacular glass canopy.

Gordon Brown: With Gordon, Tony is scrupulous about cutting the cake straight down the middle, but still somehow manages to end up with the bigger half. But, hey babe, that's the way the cookie crumbles, as Tony was telling his buddy Bill Clinton only the other day.



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Send in the mercenaries, Mr Cook

Sam Kiley on why the Sierra Leone leader must not fall

Robin Cook would rather we all forgot about Sandline. The Foreign Secretary does not welcome reminders of the role played by this mercenary outfit in Sierra Leone.

Sandline may have co-operated with British diplomats to help to restore the lawfully elected President Kabbah to his rightful position as Sierra Leone's head of state. But, we are asked to believe, it was all without Mr Cook's knowledge. Sir Thomas Legg's inquiry cleared him of any wrongdoing, it seems. That, he hopes, is an end of it. Well, it shouldn't be.

Whether or not Sandline was implementing British policy then, it is quite clear that it should be now. The Foreign Secretary should learn from the events of last year. The redeployment of mercenaries in this blighted nation would be an act of genuinely ethical foreign policy.

Sierra Leone is once again teetering between democracy and criminal dementia. Charles Taylor, Liberia's President, is trying to take over the country with a mercenary group much more sinister than the London-based Sandline.

He has hired 300 Ukrainians, along with other African dogs of war, in an effort to turn the nation into his private fiefdom.

Mr Taylor and his henchmen plan to get their hands on the country's enormously valuable resources of diamonds and rubies.

They then propose to hand power to their creatures in the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, is on death row in Freetown for his past atrocities. There is a lot of competition for the title of Africa's most malevolent militia, but in this crowded field the RUF stands out.

Mr Sankoh's sidekick, Sam Bockarie, is a former hairdresser and professional disco-dancer turned butcher. He joined the opportunistic RUF thugs when a lorry carrying volunteers drove past him while he was idling at an Abidjan bus stop four years ago. The antics of the RUF leaders, and their allies in the deposed junta forces, would be blackly comic in an Evelyn Waugh sense if they were not bleakly murderous on a massive scale.

Eastern Freetown has been razed by the rebels. Their scorched earth tactics and the staggering level of their atrocities blight much of this country. Yesterday the rebels were seen cutting off the hands of civilians fleeing their path. Refugees talk of wholesale slaughter by the rebels, piles of bodies in the streets, and all-night parrying by drug-crazed pre-teen killers. The rebels have to be stopped, and soon.

This is where Mr Cook can salvage a little honour from the Sandline affair. This week, while the British Government continued to put pressure on President Kabbah to negotiate with the rebels, British forces have been keeping a weather eye on matters. A brigadier, David Richards, carried out reconnaissance in Freetown and has returned to brief Mr

Cook's Cabinet committee. He is likely to convey the message from both Mr Kabbah and his West African allies in Ecomog, that a ceasefire and negotiations are out of the question while the rebels hold the diamond-rich East.

It is clear that jaw-jaw will not work if the rebels are allowed to maintain their grip on the diamond mines. The gems can be mined by anyone with a shovel. The rebels can generate tens of millions of pounds to fund their massacres. Talks while the rebels remain in possession of these resources will only strengthen the rebels' hands.

What the legitimate President and his allies need is air support to hit rebel bases from the rear. Without air support, Ecomog's armour and infantry can fight only a limited war of attrition, unable to strike behind the rebel lines.

It is in Britain's interest to see that air support, and additional military muscle, are supplied. We have a moral duty to maintain the President whose election we backed. But this crisis affects more than one country. If the Ecomog forces were to lose on the battlefields of Sierra Leone, a domino effect could harm the cause of progress throughout West Africa. Nigeria's own transition to democracy would be jeopardised.

Britain cannot help directly. It does not have the type of helicopter gunships that would be useful in Sierra Leone. It is, in any case, extremely unlikely that the Government would order Crown forces straight into an African bloodfest.

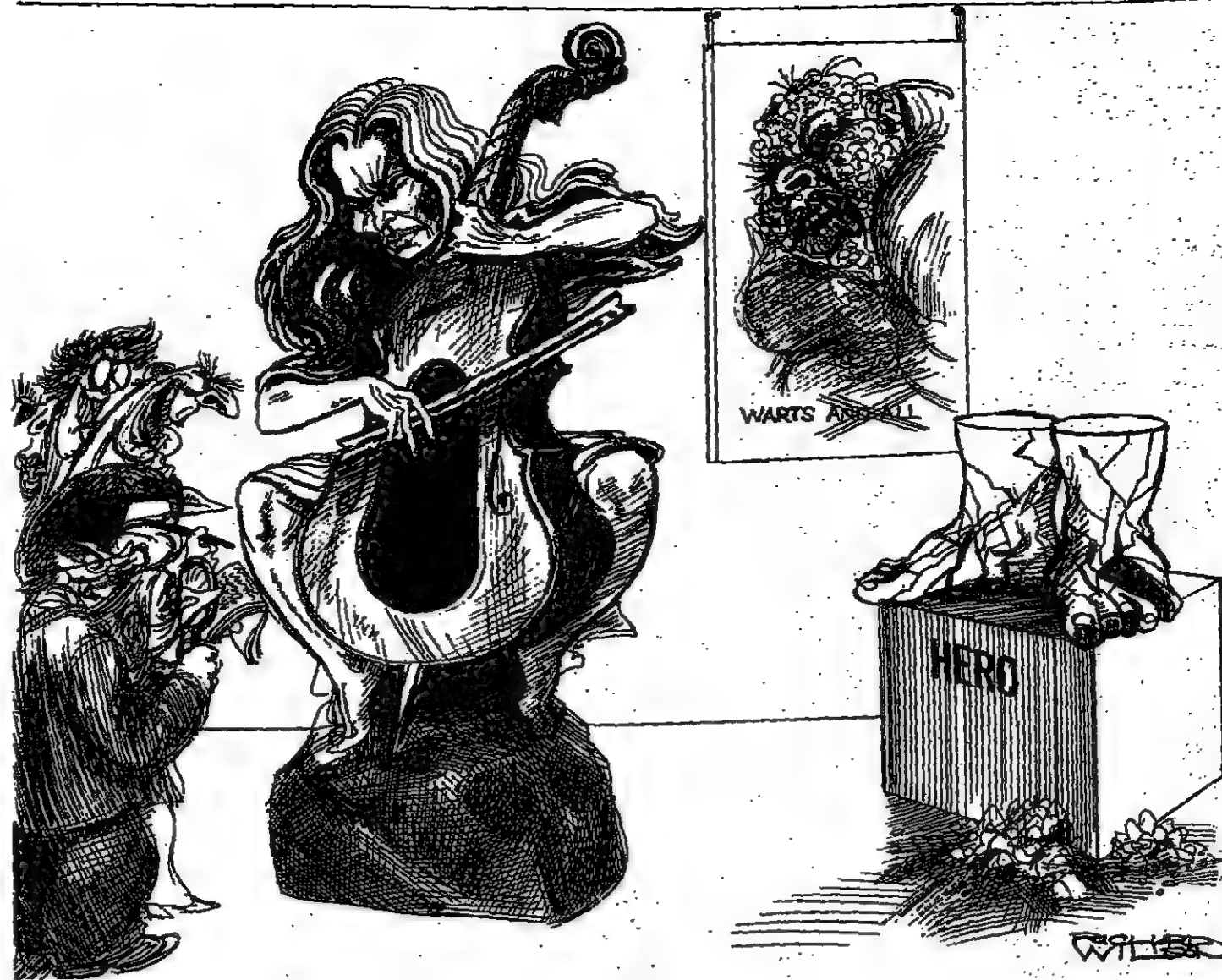
But there is an alternative. In 1997, President Kabbah had the help of Executive Outcomes, a South African mercenary company. With 146 soldiers of fortune and one M124 helicopter gunship, he had all but finished them off. But pressure from abroad forced the President to cancel that contract. As the mercenaries left, they predicted that Mr Kabbah's rule would last 90 days. He was ousted after 80.

Britain, and her Western partners, can now help Sierra Leone by hiring a company like Executive Outcomes. Sandline, or any one of a number of British security firms operating in Africa, such an organisation could bring those badly needed helicopters to fight in Freetown and beyond. The Sierra Leone Government cannot afford to do so. In all honour, we cannot afford not to.

At no risk to British soldiers and equipment, Mr Cook can practise private-sector peace-keeping. He should authorise the deployment of mercenaries to help Ecomog to drive the rebels out of Sierra Leone. That, after all, is what the Foreign Office thought was a good idea a year ago. This time one can only hope that Mr Cook learns from the past, instead of trying to forget it.

comment@the-times.co.uk

Mary Ann Sieghart returns next week.



The camera often lies

I can see it already. "Paddy and Jane" is the true but tormented tale of a soldier turned politician. This Wellington figure is a man of dazzling but flawed genius. Told through the eyes of his former secretary, the film uses their affair as a metaphor of political turmoil. Paddy, portrayed by Kenneth Branagh, is caught between wife and mistress, Labour and Tory, Charles Kennedy and Tony Blair. He draws on his SBS training to survive each crisis. We are assured that the sex scenes are "courageous and explicit... intended to convey a deeper kind of truth". Ten provincial reps are closed to supply the Arts Council grant.

The film *Hilary and Jackie*, initiated by the sister of Jacqueline du Pré, is a similar melodrama of rivalry and love. It is rescued from sentimentality only by Emily Watson's acting and frequent mercy dashes by Elgar. Whether the remorselessly unpleasant scenes are all true cannot be judged, since du Pré is dead. Most of her friends and admirers believe she has been defamed by an angst-ridden sister and brother-in-law. Certainly any shred of dignity or decency has been edited out. This being a film, much is made of sex and the whole concoction is called "true", a word almost devoid of meaning in movies. The film was incomprehensibly subsidised by the British taxpayer.

This is a road much trodden, and much littered with cant. Scholarly pens are sharpened over *Shakespeare in Love*, a film of Tom Stoppard's charming fiction that a randy Elizabethan poet called William Shakespeare had written the block during a play called *Romeo and Juliet*. From this he was deliciously rescued by Gwyneth Paltrow, leaving us for ever in her debt. There is no evidence that any of this happened, but so what? Stoppard makes no claim to veracity. Nor does the dazzling designer-Tudor floorshow, *Elizabeth*, currently on general release. Some myths are invulnerable to correction.

There is no evidence for half of history, and even less for the hack history of the film industry. *Gandhi* was a travesty of the British Raj. *Amadeus* was not about the real Mozart. *The Music Lovers* was not about the real Tchaikovsky. Closer to our time, Oliver Stone's JFK gave a false account of the killing of Kennedy. Jim Sheridan's *In the Name of the Father* was a false account of the Guildford Four. The

"True story" films should carry a Mostly Untrue certificate from the censors

Carlton documentary. They used fabricated scenes and dialogue, intercut with documentary footage, to imply as fact what they knew was fiction. Such falsity was said in both cases to be avowedly propagandist, to expose the falsity of others. These artists demand a licence to expose the lies of others. This is the ultimate *trahison des clercs*. In my view the same goes for the portrayal of du Pré as a genius of unredeemed nastiness.

When art has exhausted its imaginative powers and has to borrow real life, it should accept the disciplines of history and journalism. These are not only the laws of libel, but codes and protocols of accuracy, fairness and respect for the dignity and privacy of individuals, both living and dead. Of course journalism often falls far short of these disciplines, but it at least acknowledges a framework of self-discipline. Film-makers respect nothing. Constrained only by laws against defaming living persons (letting Daniel Barenboim off the *Hilary and Jackie* hook), they can lie with impunity and without redress.

Art's rejoinder to this purism is to cry Censorship! It depends what we mean by the censor, a wolf who comes in many disguises. The ITC was "censoring" Carlton in fining it for its drugs story. The laws of libel and racial and religious discrimination are censorship. So too are those controlling copyright, advertising and public deception. On this basis alone the British Board of Film Classification should surely demand the removal of the words "true story" from films which are blatantly nothing of the sort. At very least it should have a new MUCertificate, meaning Mostly Untrue.

Yet censorship is not the best defence against artistic mendacity. It is the worst. The best defence is to demand that the film-makers, by all means let Hilary give her version of her sister's sad tale, if she must. By all means add in the sex, the profanity, the terminal illness and Elgar's Cello Concerto, if they are the only means to an audience. By all means call the product art. But the rest of us need not stand on the ceremony of that art. Truth comes first. If film-makers claim a licence to damn the living and the dead, they must get damnation in return.

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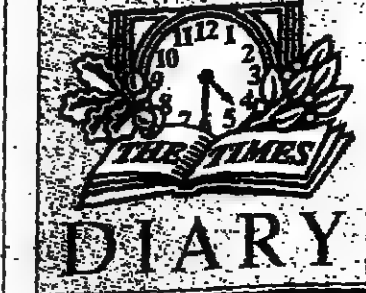
astonishing £2 million by the Independent Television Commission for including fabricated material in a documentary on drug trafficking. "The deception," said the ITC, "involved a wholesale breach of trust between the programme-makers and the viewers." The company did not disagree, gulped and paid up. Film journalists who make offerings at the altar of history are tested by such standards. Not so feature film-makers. I venture to suggest that Carlton had sent its work round to Channel 4 and claimed it to be a "true story" art film. It would not have been fined for fabrication, but showered with praise and lottery cash.

The cobbler should stick to his last. Art's contribution to history is to reveal its hidden strands through the prism of fiction. The wrongs of British policy in Northern Ireland were more effectively exposed in *The Crying Game* than by Mr Sheridan's Guildford Four fiction. The best study of Watergate was the fictional *Washington Behind Closed Doors*, not the many films depicting Nixon as a monster and purporting to "tell the truth". Admirers of du Pré know that the most moving evocation of a musician's struggle against multiple sclerosis was in Tom Kempinski's fine play, *Duet for One*. For all the interviews given by the makers of *Hilary and Jackie*, their motive is unclear. If it was meant as a fictional study of the agony of genius, why drag a real person's character through the mud? If it was to be a biography of du Pré—as it seems to the public—surely there was some obligation to accuracy and balance?

When art thus moves its tanks on to the lawn of truth, the defenders seem to turn and run. The so-called drama documentaries by Stone and Sheridan were far more culpable acts of public deception than the



Simon Jenkins



Baby reds

BABY BALLS are to be taken to the heart of the Labour Establishment. Its most glamorous couple are about to embark on the founding of a dynasty. Yvette Cooper (right) wife of Ed Balls, Gordon Brown's sharpshooter, is expecting in June. The MP is the latest "Blair babe" to reproduce. She follows Claire Curtis-Thomas, Debra Shipley, Jacqui Smith and Ruth Kelly (left). Yvette purrs: "This year is going to be big for Ed and me. We are really pleased. The only problem is I couldn't drink much over Christmas to celebrate."

Ever a power person, Cooper has told her local party she will campaign in the European elections until she drops. Poor baby.



● KATE THORNTON of Top of the Pops pedigree has attacked general Cheltenham. She suggests that the twee spa town is really home for white trash. "Not being pregnant by 14 made me stand out," she says. "I suffered bullying. When I go back home I drive past those people in my nice car. I see them pushing their buggies and I think 'Well, who's the smart one?'"

Tory benefit

KNOW a Conservative in need? A fund for distressed Tory folk is being wound up by Sir Archibald Hamilton's 1922 Committee. The search has started for worthy final recipients and as the party lost 171 seats last time there could be a few takers. The fund was established in 1975 to help former Tory members and their surviving spouses who find themselves in difficulty. Marion Roe, MP, chief pension officer, says: "The House has its own arrangements now. We are looking to distribute the balance, so anyone who knows of worthy causes, contact us." Make the queue orderly now, please.

● A PORTRAIT of Hitler by that thirsty dog, Sir Nicholas Fairbairn, is being flogged by his widow. It's a riot of missing features mired in yellow and blue. Lady Sam became chief beneficiary of Nicky's will on his deathbed, at the expense of his daughters. Lady S is to emigrate to Mexico having enjoyed a stint in a drying-out clinic. Life threatens to be economical: the work should raise £60.



Euro stars?

WILL the Ashdowns join that other couple in Brussels who never made it, the Kinocks? Tony Blair, I hear, has suggested to Paddy that should he want Sir Leon Brittan's job at the Euro Commission, it is his. Although one of the Brussels sinecures normally goes to a Tory, it is not obligatory.

Also uncertain about his future: dear Alan Beith. He has campaigned discreetly to replace Betty Boothroyd as Speaker. After Wednesday's news, he made it clear that "now is not the time" to discuss the succession—code, I feel, for "I'm mad for it".

● UNLIKELY cronies. Alan Clark tells me he "adores" that gentle soul Alastair Campbell and thinks "he should be PM". Well, he almost is. The admiration is returned. Campbell has been heard to say that he knows what the Tories think as he has "spoken to Al the only one with a brain".

Odd couple

SHOULD be fun to see how Lord Wakeham and Gerald Kaufman rub along on the Lords Royal Commission. The two clashed a year ago when Gerald ventured that John was a "dimwit" while Wakeham said the MP was "an expert at offensive remarks".

JASPER GERARD

'Proud, patriotic, high-minded and diligent — unmistakably British down to his bowler hat and blazer'

Defining what makes Brits British is the latest trivial pursuit for politicians. An historical criterion for Britishness uses things that we are all supposed to do together, such as bumping on horseback after foxes, despising the French and hating the Pope. We might call this the unification principle. But its flaw is that today at least as many Brits shudder at fox-hunters, admire the French and revere the Pope.

A better criterion for Britishness is the insularity principle. This selects the things that Britons do that nobody else in the world would dream of copying, like cold baths in midwinter, regimental blazers with brass buttons and opening the bedroom window at night, especially when there is a freezing gale. Such as:

1. Bread pudding. We find this mess of bread, hot milk, and

cloves essential for eating with birds. Nobody else in the world agrees with us.

2. There are many similar national delicacies that define Britishness: Marmite, kippers, plum pudding, fish and chips soaked in vinegar, mushy peas, bloaters, mint sauce with lamb, "Gentlemen's relish" and all other such fish pastes, pork scratchings, powdered custard, digestive biscuits half covered in chemical chocolate.

3. Lesser breeds celebrate Christmas with *jule gras* and oysters, Chateaubriand and venison, and other unseasonal foods. Americans eat their native bird for Thanksgiving, cooked with style and cranberries. Only the British fortify the cottonwool fowl for Christmas with chipolata sausages and Brussels sprouts.

4. Only the British guzzle Brussels sprouts. Not even the

Belgians will touch them.

5. It is a cliché that Britons drink beer at warmer than room temperature while standing up. But if we do secure a stool at the bar, it is our custom to spread our elbows and conversation to block anyone else from approaching the bar to give his order. More authoritarian countries would arrange to serve beer at tables, or at least paint bits of the bar red to keep it clear for orders.

6. Of course Britons invented team sports and games. Other nations are better at them today. A surprising number of them play cricket. But we are unrivalled at the stupidity, cheating and venality of our sportsmen, the egos, bungs and incompe-

Philip Howard



tence of our sports administrators, and the tribal behaviour of supporters. The only sport that nobody in the world bothers to play other than us is croquet.

7. Pantomime is alien to aliens. It may be descended from the *commedia dell'arte* and echo the last enchantments of the music hall. But it has declined a long way from them. Foreigners find pantomime absurd, coarse, distasteful and incomprehensible.

8. Who but the British would pay even a penny for crackers? What sentient being enjoys wearing a paper hat, reading a pathetic motto, blowing a whistle, throwing streamers and receiving a "free gift" of plastic of no ascertainable purpose?

9. Other nations send their naughty children to boarding school and regard teaching as a noble profession. The British send away their richest, most privileged and most socially upwardly mobile little darlings.

10. Only the Brits would dream of wearing bowler hats (mainly in Ulster these days, with rolled umbrellas). Ulsters, scratchy tweed knickerbockers, green (now yellow) wellies, club ties of distasteful colours such as MCC, and collar pins. These are all intended as marks of tribal distinction. They show that the wearer belongs to something, and, more important, that you are excluded. Englishwomen wear tweed nightdresses to show that bed is for the serious business of snoring on a hot water bottle, not for decadent continental hanky-panky.

11. At his best the Briton can be high-minded, diligent, patriotic,

proud, humorous and virtuous. At his worst the Briton can be virtuous, humorous, proud, patriotic, diligent and high-minded.

12. It is remarkable that no other nations copy us in these or other insular particularities, such as the peagee and the horribly unfair custom of primogeniture. But that is their bad luck. The banal conclusion to the popular quest for Britishness is that our mongrel peoples include every peculiarity under the sun. That foreigners are odd. Shakespeare defined us. "England, hedged in with the main, / That water-walled bulwark, still secure / And confident from foreign purposes..." There is the Channel now. And we have become less xenophobic. Some of us can like foreigners, even if they are not waiters or au pairs.

The defining characteristic of Britishness is still, snug, doty insularity.

comment@the-times.co.uk



THE POTENT TAXPAYER

Viagra sparks a welcome debate on who pays for what

A diamond-shaped blue pill has stimulated a long overdue debate about the National Health Service. By proposing that the anti-impotence drug Viagra should be restricted to men with serious disabilities, the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, has implicitly accepted what others have long acknowledged: treatments provided by the NHS need to be rationed by means beyond that of the waiting list. A Health Secretary is now openly meddling with doctors' freedom to prescribe according to clinical need. He is limiting patients' universal right to free treatment. For this Mr Dobson deserves praise. Instead of protesting, the medical profession should help Mr Dobson to devise new, fresh ideas about how to fund the NHS and meet public demand.

A worthwhile debate demands candour. As recently as Monday Mr Dobson stated that treatment is given "according to individual need, not a preordained entitlement" — a view to which yesterday's decision runs counter. Doctors should acknowledge that, as there are not limitless resources to fund the NHS, setting priorities is necessary. The question is who should set them, and on what terms? Are contraceptives, or treatments to tackle obesity, to be classed as "lifestyle drugs", despite the public and medical good they may bring? And who is in a position to ordain that a man with six months to live should not be given an expensive new drug that might give him another year of life on the ground of cost alone?

These decisions are already being taken in a confused, chaotic manner and behind closed Whitehall and health authority doors. So-called "postcode prescribing", where a treatment is available under one health authority but not another, appears to be an established practice. In East Norfolk, doctors are allowed to prescribe a drug for motor neurone disease that can

prolong sufferers' lives by three to six months. In neighbouring Suffolk, patients have to pay for it themselves. Universality of provision may be a good political catchphrase but it rings hollow in a growing number of regions.

The emergence of new drugs and the genetics revolution threaten to exacerbate this problem. The Government hopes to pass other difficult decisions to the new National Institute for Clinical Excellence. This body's task is to iron out inconsistencies in health provision by judging whether new drugs should be available on the NHS on the grounds of efficacy, and then provide national clinical guidance. While national guidelines will be welcome, decisions affecting patients will be taken by remote government advisers, not doctors or surgeons. Ministers cannot expect that this new quango will address the fundamental conundrum: however much taxpayers' money is spent on health, the public's expectations will never be met. Rationing cannot be addressed by ministers wondering "how can we provide the best service?". Instead, they should be asking "What is the public prepared to pay for and how?"

Mr Dobson should consider health systems in other countries, where people are required to pay for some or all of their treatment depending on medical need: serious illnesses are treated free, while inessential drugs must be paid for. The Government should encourage individuals to take more responsibility for their own wellbeing by encouraging private medical insurance. In a more transparent system, where people are insured against misfortune, the prospect of paying for prescriptions is less likely to provoke such dismay. So long as the public is shielded from the true costs of treatment, the demands on the NHS will go on soaring, leaving Mr Dobson impotent to respond.

JUST JUDGES

Zimbabwe's courts take liberty's side against torturers

The illegal detention and torture of two Zimbabwean journalists by the military is chilling. The Government of President Mugabe has never been tolerant of dissent. But it seems increasingly ready to use unlawful intimidation against its growing number of critics. Yet the journalists' appalling treatment has also elicited vigorous protest from churches, unions and intellectuals and brought out the best in the country's civil institutions, notably the courts. Mark Chavunduka, the Editor of Zimbabwe's leading independent newspaper, *The Standard*, and Ray Choto, a senior *Standard* reporter, probably owe their lives to the perseverance of their publisher, Clive Wilson, and their lawyer, and to the determination of two brave judges to uphold the law.

The two men still face trial, under a section of the 1960 Law and Order Maintenance Act framed under white rule with the express purpose of suppressing freedom of speech, for causing "alarm and despondency". All charges should now be dropped. The journalists have been subjected to hideous tortures, including electric shocks, burns, beatings and the "submarine" method of water suffocation. The accuracy or otherwise of the *Standard's* news report by which both stand, that 23 soldiers had been arrested for inciting others to a military coup is a minor matter compared with the flagrant contempt of court shown not only by the military who detained them, but by Mwenemahachi, Zimbabwe's powerful Defence Minister.

Under Zimbabwean law, civilians suspected of an offence can be arrested only by the police, who must grant them access to a lawyer and their family and produce them in court to be charged within 48 hours. Last Thursday, two days after Mr Chavunduka

was detained by the military and held incommunicado, Judge George Smith ruled in the High Court that the military had no jurisdiction over him and ordered his release. The Defence Ministry refused, handing him over to police custody only on Monday, after Judge James DeVette announced that if he was not brought to court, he would order the arrest of Mr Mahachi and his principal aide that night. When Mr Choto then came out of hiding to give himself up to the police, the military seized both men and tortured them continuously for 24 hours in an attempt to force them to divulge their sources.

Mr Choto believed his torturers when they told him that the President had signed his death warrant. What all Zimbabweans believe is that Mr Mahachi, who is close to Mr Mugabe, would not have defied the courts unless he believed that he had the President's approval. Mr Mugabe keeps his Cabinet on a tight rein. Many will also believe that the news report must have had real substance to provoke so extreme a reaction. This has not been confined to *The Standard*; police in the southern town of Masvingo have arrested an officer of the feared Central Intelligence Organisation for beating up journalists in three news organisations. The ill-paid military's discontent, which common knowledge has been sharpened by its heavy casualties in the deeply unpopular Zimbabwean military intervention in Congo's civil war.

President Mugabe's only credible course now is to dismiss his Defence Minister, court-martial the soldiers concerned and drop all charges against *The Standard*. Unless he disowns this disgraceful act, he will be indelibly associated with it, and his *fin de règne* will become more unstable and threatening than it already is.

WORLD WIDE HONOUR

The new and lasting memorial of the Web

When they were buried, their memory was kept alive by the most enduring means known to man — with simple lettering in stone above their graves. Line after line of such headstone is ranged in French and Belgian war cemeteries. Where there was once mud, rubble and blood, there are now some of the world's most poignant resting places, where Commonwealth soldiers who fell in two world wars lie buried. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission promised that "their name liveth for evermore". But time and distance have separated families from the records of their long-fallen loved ones.

The commission has now made imaginative use of a new and unexpected tool for tracing and remembering those who fell, the Internet. Since the Debt of Honour Register was posted on the net just before Armistice Day, more than four million people have visited the site. The Commission has been flooded with follow-up inquiries. In the first ten days alone, some 250,000 people from all over the world sought details of relatives and long-fallen friends. Interest has also been stimulated by the recent wave of books and films about the First World War, the moving interviews with the last members of the generation that fought in the trenches and last November's commemorations of the 80th anniversary of the Armistice.

The Commonwealth War Graves Com-

mission has deservedly earned praise over the years for the meticulous care with which it tends the graves of 1.78 million soldiers who lie in 3,000 foreign fields in some 150 countries. When it was established, it took the early and controversial decision that in the remembrance of death all are equal. No family was allowed to purchase a larger plot, no Briton to have a better headstone than a subject soldier from the Empire, no officer to be marked out from his men.

The commission's Internet site has properly preserved this spirit. Each entry has the same format, dignity and accompanying history. Each upholds the promise to "defeat the oblivion of time".

History best comes alive when it touches human lives. Family history is often lost in a modern world where neighbourhoods are more likely to change and younger generations less likely to keep in touch. Family Bibles are rarer and parish records less comprehensive. Yet the need to trace our roots is as strong as ever. So, too, is the yearning to unravel the mysteries of how missing relatives died and what happened to the uncles and grandfathers who went to war and never returned. Searches that used to take years are now possible in a trice; questions can be answered and pride in sacrifice rekindled. For this, as for its unstinting work in tending the dead, the commission deserves high praise.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

MEPs' power and will to censure the Commission

From Mr Roy Perry, MEP for Wight and Hampshire South (European People's Party Group (Conservative))

Sir, The analysts by William Rees-Mogg of the role played by Labour MEPs, most especially Pauline Green, in actually saving the present European Commission was particularly sharp (article, January 18; see also letters, January 16). Mrs Green indeed said at the very outset that she tabled a censure motion with the intention to vote against it. No one can be surprised that she ultimately applied the tactic of withdrawing her motion.

However, Mr Blair has another option to show whether he really believes Mrs Cresson or Senior Marin have fallen short of the standards expected of them. Under Clause 160 of the Treaty of Rome the Council may apply to the European Court of Justice to compulsorily retire a commissioner. That is a power so far denied to the Parliament.

It is a pity that, unlike the European Parliament which is at least open in its processes, the Council of Ministers is totally closed and we need never know whether Tony Blair or any of the other ministers has the courage to make such a move.

Yours faithfully,
ROY J. PERRY
Tarrant Farmhouse, West Wellow,
Romsey, Hampshire SO51 6DA,
January 18.

From Mrs Pauline Latham

Sir, I was in Strasbourg for the whole of last week, shadowing the Conservative MEP, Giles Chichester. I witnessed at first hand not only an MEP's way of life but also what happened during the week, culminat-

ing in the vote on Thursday on whether to censure the Commission.

National governments did indeed put enormous pressure on their MEPs not to vote for the motion of censure. The Socialist group in the European Parliament, led by British Labour MEP, Pauline Green, withdrew rather than upset their friends.

The resolve of the Conservative MEPs, led by Edward McMillan-Scott, did not waver. They voted for censure because they do not believe that fraud and mismanagement should be condoned.

I'm sure that, if voters think that our Labour MEPs are happy to sweep things under the carpet, they will re-examine their loyalties at the European elections in June and prefer to endorse the decisive, clear line on fraud demonstrated by the Conservative MEPs.

Yours faithfully,
PAULINE LATHAM
(Prospective Conservative European Parliamentary Candidate for the East Midlands),
Heron Wood, Vicarage Lane,
Little Eaton, Derby DE21 5EA,
January 18.

From Mr Peter R. Wiles

Sir, The European Parliament had an opportunity to widen its powers and control over the Commission last week, and flunked it.

The Government is busy ensuring that we voters won't have the opportunity to vote for MEPs who may take a more robust line in future. Our best riposte is to let the next lot be elected on a turnout of over 10 per cent. Members of political parties might want to drag themselves to the polling booths to vote for their party's list, but

I can't for the life of me see why anyone else should bother.

Yours faithfully,
PETER R. WILES,
33 Pinewoods, Church Aston,
Newport, Shropshire TF10 9LN,
peter.wiles@icweb.com

From Mr Alf Lomas, MEP
for London North East (Party of European Socialists Group (Labour))

Sir, I agree largely with the article by William Rees-Mogg but, when he criticised Labour MEPs for voting against the motion of censure on the Commission, he might have mentioned that there were five who did not obey the whip.

Three Labour MEPs, including myself, voted for the motion of censure and two others abstained. Not many, I concede, but there are still a few free spirits left.

Yours sincerely,
ALF LOMAS,
Ground Floor, Queensway House,
275/285 High Street,
Stratford, E15 2TF,
January 19.

From Mr Norman Shelmerdine

Sir, The British Government should immediately stop all financial payments to the Commission until such time as adequate controls are in force.

The problem would soon be resolved, especially if other similar-minded countries follow our lead.

Yours faithfully,
N. A. SHELMERDINE,
Bracken, St Catherine's,
Hook Heath, Woking,
Surrey GU24 0HW,
January 18.

Pinochet supporters

From Señor Sebastián Allaina and others

Sir, We write on behalf of 34 pro-Pinochet demonstrators (report, January 19). We have been standing outside the British Houses of Parliament in order to make it clear to the British law lords and the British authorities that many Chileans want General Pinochet freed, so that the reconciliation process in Chile can continue undamaged.

We are not being paid to participate in this demonstration of support. We were able to achieve low-price air fares and accommodation by travelling as a group and these arrangements were negotiated by pro-Pinochet groups in Chile.

The money we are spending is a lot more worthwhile than the British taxpayers' money that is being wasted supporting the Spanish Government's attempt to extradite the man who brought back democracy to Chile.

Yours faithfully,
SEBASTIÁN ALLAINA,
JUAN ARIZTIA,
RAUL MANES CATALON,
FRESIA GONZALEZ,
SOL LETELLIER,
TECO RUIZ,
c/o PO Box 15, London SW6 3JU,
January 21.

'Shaming' of doctor

From Dr Robert M. H. Lefever

Sir, I am no defender of doctors. Next week I am giving evidence to the General Medical Council in the case of a doctor against whom I myself have brought a complaint for malpractice.

However, I am concerned by the case of Dr William Cuthbert (report, January 20) who was "named and shamed" by the Commons Public Administration Select Committee. He has already expressed deep remorse for his error of clinical judgment in this particular case and has apologised several times. What more do they want? The end of his career?

Sincerely,
ROBERT LEFEVER,
2a Pelham Street, SW7 3HU,
January 20.

Africa's legacy

From Mr Alan Forward

Sir, Your leading article (January 8) says "Britain could have ruled Africa better and left it better", and the High Commissioner of Kenya (letter, January 18) accuses those who colonised Africa of "eliminating native populations and the outright suppression of basic human rights". In fact, British governments over many years were engaged in preparing African countries for independence; what other Empire has adopted such a policy?

You also rightly draw attention to Africans' courageous opposition to day in the judiciary and the Churches, parts of the hounded press and many a village to misrule. Is such opposition not part of Britain's legacy?

Christianity, justice, democracy, education, journalism and advances in medicine, as well as political and economic development, were all part of the legacy. In Uganda, for example, we ruled for only 68 years from the declaration of the protectorate in 1894 to independence in 1962. Now, 37 years later, it might be concluded that we could have left Uganda better if we had left it later.

Many Ugandans, and Kenyans too,

Rising through the Army ranks

From Major-General John Stokoe, Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Land Command

Sir, Mr John Douce's letter (January 12; see also letters, January 18) has prompted me to contribute to the ill-informed debate begun by Major Eric Joyce, in which the latter alleges that the Army is officered by a senior social "elite". This is not the Army I recognise and is not the one in which I serve.

I find little of real substance in Major Joyce's sterile and outdated thesis. I attended a state grammar school before joining the Army as a 15-year-old apprentice in 1963. After three years I graduated to the Regular Army as a Lance Corporal, achieving a place at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst a year later and a subsequent commission. Thirty years on, and 51 years old, I am a Major-General — a position gained on merit pursuing a career I have enjoyed to the full. There are many ex-boy soldiers leading equally fulfilling careers as commissioned officers.

I relate this to demonstrate that the Army is a true meritocracy where men and women succeed entirely on ability.

Lessons on longevity

From Professor R. A. Weale

Sir, Neither your excellent two-page feature, "Time to stop the tyranny of ageism", nor your amusing leading article, "Ever young" (both January 11), so much as hints at the fact that one of the most ageing institutions at the present time is the NHS.

Medical records show the patient's name followed by his/her date of birth. One may well ask what this piece of information is intended to convey. As a device for facilitating a diagnosis it must be suspect, and as one for inducing stereotypical thinking it should be deprecated.

Chronological and biological ages rarely coincide, and patients would be better served by judgments based on the latter, even if this means a greater demand on the medical thought processes or even a change in clinical

I am shortly to join the board of the new Army Foundation College at Harrogate, where I served my apprenticeship when it was an apprentice college. I can think of no more satisfying a task than to be involved in a college which is training high-quality young men and women from many diverse backgrounds, knowing, through personal experience, that amongst them will be some of our future senior officers.

Yours etc,
JOHN STOKOE,
Erskine Barracks,
Wilton, Salisbury SP2 0AG,
January 18.

From Lance Corporal P. Sichel (ret'd)
Sir, Colonel Charles Wilson (ret'd) states that "nothing stands in the way of every man in the Army reaching his ceiling". Very probably true, but who determines the altitude of the ceiling? Probably the very same people who have always done so.

Yours faithfully,
PETER SICHEL,
130 Watling Street, Wellington,
Telford, Shropshire TF1 2NH,
sichel@globalnet.co.uk,
January 18.

training. The worship of the calendar extends to relatively trivial fields.

Professor Tom Kirkwood expresses some concern about his eyesight. Your photograph suggests that he is short-sighted; even so, in a few years he may need reading glasses, and it is very probable that they will not be prescribed on the basis of his visual need but on his chronological age.

The key to this is a set of tables based on outmoded and heavily criticised data obtained by an American eye specialist during the first quarter of this century. When Professor Kirkwood starts needing reading glasses, and is asked his age, his reply should be that he has forgotten.

Yours very truly,
R. A. WEALE,
King's College London,
Cornwall House,
Waterloo Road, SE1 8WA,
January 12.

The Northern Province of Kenya, for instance, is today the scene of much banditry, murders and cattle-raiding; yet for the 30 or 40 years preceding the country's independence the province was controlled by no more than 20 administrators and a few police officers, who spent much of their time on safari showing the flag and stamping out small outbreaks of lawlessness before they spread.

There are no quick or easy solutions to the problems of African government. If the opposition is potentially corrupt, democracy will not help, though a free press will. The only solution is to teach the principles of good government in schools, universities, churches, and on the job.

It is little use for Western governments to try to beat African countries into shape with sticks. Aid should be focused on teaching good government — together with family planning, to ensure that the rate of population growth does not exceed the rate of economic growth.

Yours etc,
O. S. KNOWLES
(Acting Permanent Secretary,
Kenya Ministry of Finance, 1967),
11 Cuxham Road,
Watlington, Oxfordshire OX9 5JW.

Voluntary code to check on nannies

From the Editor of The Professional Nanny

Sir, Before your experiences with a bumbling Australian article, "Why parents must be wary", January 19, Joe Joseph's family had employed a "string of wonderfully reliable" nannies and this one's immediate predecessor had been "brilliant". However, it was the problems of this one nanny that merited publicity — good nannies are simply not newsworthy.

The Government's newly announced voluntary code will only go some way towards boosting nannies' status. A Kitemark will be awarded to agencies which guarantee to interview nannies face-to-face and check their CVs and references — formalising a procedure many agencies already insist on and good nannies are more than happy to submit to.

The fact remains that many parents still either do not use agencies or employ inappropriate forms of childcare, such as an au pair or mother's help, to do a nanny's job. When something goes wrong the press is once again full of "nanny from hell" stories.

This does not, of course, diminish the sheer awfulness of the Sullivan case, nor of any other case where a child is damaged by her carer. Most nannies, however, see themselves as professionals and despair of the way in which their profession is portrayed in the media.

Yours faithfully,
JUDITH CALVER,
Editor, The Professional Nanny,
Admiral House,
66-68 East Smithfield, E1 9XY,
judith.calver@btinternet.co.uk
January 19.

Du Pré film

From Mr John Burgess

Sir, There needs to be no special pleading by Julian Lloyd Webber and his co-signatories on behalf of the late Jacqueline du Pré (letter, January 20; features, January 21). Her contribution to music is quite unstilled and fortunately available for all to hear: her sex life and character, although possibly colourful and flawed respectively, are not relevant to her musicianship or lifetime achievement.

However, musicians, particularly those with a high public profile, run the same risks as politicians in conducting their private lives. They should beware of the risks they run and either moderate their behaviour, or take the appropriate precautions to ensure continuing confidentiality.

I remain, Sir,
yours faithfully,
JOHN BURGESS,
65 Harle Close, Holt,
Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA1 4PY,
jb.burgess@blightforce9.co.uk
January 20.

From the Chief Executive of Film Four Ltd

Sir, Julian Lloyd Webber and others object in their letter today to the portrayal of Jacqueline du Pré in the film *Hilary and Jackie*. This organisation co-financed the film, and our records indicate that four of the six signatories have not actually seen it. I would suggest that people make their own minds up as to the quality, success and, in particular, tone of the film rather than be swayed by the prejudices of others.

Yours etc,
PAUL WEBSTER,
Chief Executive, Film Four Ltd,
124 Horseferry Road, SW1P 2TX,
January 20.

After Ashdown

From Mr Rhodri Morgan, MP for Cardiff West (Labour)

Sir, Following the departure of Paddy Ashdown as its leader (reports and leading article, January 21), can we expect that the Liberal Democrat Party under his successor will change its policy of "constructive opposition" to the Government to one of destructive co-operation?

Yours,
RHODRI MORGAN,
House of Commons,
January 21.

Chambers wit

From Ms Helen Grayson

Sir, My favourite entry in *Chambers* (letters, January 12, 18, and 19) is the one for Japanese cedar: "A very tall Japanese conifer (*Cryptomeria japonica*) often dwarfed by Japanese gardeners."

Yours faithfully,
HELEN GRAYSON,
39 St James Terrace,
Horsforth, Leeds LS18 5QT,
petulfield@ci.compulink.co.uk

From Mr Adam Ogilvie-Smith

Sir, My edition of *Chambers Dictionary* notes that a picture restorer is someone who "cleans and restores and sometimes ruins old pictures".

Yours faithfully,
ADAM OGILVIE-SMITH,
Hyde House, Longworth,
Oxfordshire OX13 5HH,
January 21.

OBITUARIES

JACQUES LECOQ

Jacques Lecoq, mime artist, theatre director and teacher, died on January 19 aged 77. He was born in Paris on December 15, 1921.

From Etienne Decroux in *Les Enfants du Paradis* to Marcel Marceau, France has given the world some of its most memorable images of the white-faced, poignant or comic mime. Jacques Lecoq was never a public figure, and almost never appeared on the large or small screen, and yet he belongs among the most significant exponents of an art form that he preferred to call, not mime, but corporeal expression.

He was, above all, a great teacher. The school that he founded in 1956, and which continues to this day, trained some 130 students a year in the art of using the body to expressive effect. Lecoq was not interested in turning out classic mimes or actors, but in developing the resources of physical vocabulary, with or without speech. His two-year courses explored such areas as silent improvisation, (I ask them to say nothing the better to understand what lies behind words), the use of masks, techniques of movement, and the spirit of comedy, melodrama and tragedy. No doubt the focus on unspoken expression was all the more acute for the cosmopolitan mix of English, French, German, Swedish, Italian, American and other nationalities (70 in all) attending the courses at 37, rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis, in northern Paris.

Those who learnt from the Lecoq way with actors form an



Lecoq: developing the resources of physical vocabulary

equally rich and varied list. Among them are the members of Theatre de Complicite, Fouchard, Mummenschaus, Steven Berkoff, Geoffrey Rush (Oscar winner for *Shine*), the writers Yasmina Reza (author of *Art*) and Eduardo Manet, and directors Christophe Marthaler, Jorge Lavelli, Luc Bondy and Ariane Mnouchkine of the Theatre du Soleil. "I wasn't at his courses for long," Mnouchkine has said, "but it was as important to me as if I had spent ten years there."

From an early practice of sport and sports teaching, Lecoq developed a keen aware-

ness of the body and its mechanisms. During the Second World War, when training as a physical education instructor in Paris, he met Jean-Louis Barault and the founders of Education through Drama (L'Education par le Jeu Dramatique), which involved a number of other key figures of postwar French theatre, such as Roger Blin and Marie-Hélène Dasté. Linked with Antonin Artaud, the movement aimed to explore a new theatrical approach to the body and the voice.

Lecoq's own interest in the stage grew in 1945 from his

involvement with Travail et Culture alongside Yves Robert and the Frères Jacques. He now began working with Jean Dasté's troupe in Grenoble, acting as a kind of teacher of movement and gesture. From Dasté he learnt about Noh and the use of masks.

It was, already, a cosmopolitan career. In 1947, Lecoq taught theatrical expression in Germany, then in the following year went to Padua where he found a sculptor, Amleto Sartori, who agreed to make commedia dell'arte masks for him. He also became close to Giorgio Strehler, for whom he set up the Piccolo Teatro theatre school. At the same time he befriended Dario Fo and did the occasional job at Cinecittà.

Coming back to France, Lecoq now set about creating his own mime school, one that would offer an alternative to what he saw as the "sclerotic" technique of Etienne Decroux, and which accepted a greater crossover than his contemporary, Marcel Marceau. The aim was, he said, to move "towards open mime and not towards the mime which is enclosed in its own silence."

Students were taught a series of challenging physical exercises from mastering their diaphragm to acrobatics, but always with a view to extending possibilities rather than developing some kind of physical virtuosity. A key phase of the training was learning to clown. One by one, students were asked to make their fellows laugh: their almost inevitable failure was the first step in learning a kind of authenticity. Being a clown, Lecoq would explain, "is not a role you learn; you are a

clown. So in the end the clown which belongs to them alone will be brought out... Once you can fully come to terms with what you are, your own territory, then you can make people laugh." In a similar way, using a neutral mask, Lecoq students learnt how the carriage and movements of the body could seem to impart expression to the otherwise blank face.

Ariane Mnouchkine has saluted Lecoq as a "master... but one who had that very rare ability to open up a path without necessarily having to take it himself." His own discretion was remarkable, and meant that he remained out of the public eye. Nor did Lecoq seek to be a guru: his school had other influential teachers too. And while he did have his own one-man show, *Tout Change* ("Everything Moves"), in which "a lifetime observation of body language is packed into 90 minutes, starting with the way we walk and ending with comic and tragic masks", performances were rare (he came to the Queen Elizabeth Hall in 1988). In France, finally, his statements on the theatre, *Le Corps poétique*, were published only last year, and he managed to oversee the first two documentaries about his work, *Les Deux Voyages de Jacques Lecoq*, shortly before his death.

His true heritage lies in the enrichment of theatrical forms to which he contributed, and it is to be hoped, in the continuing vitality of his school which will remain open.

He is survived by his second wife Fay, by their daughter and two sons, and by a son of his first marriage.

ANATOLI RYBAKOV

Anatoli Rybakov, Russian author, died in New York on December 23 aged 87. He was born on January 1, 1911.

"IMAGINE Genghis Khan with a telephone," reflected the ageing Tolstoy, inadvertently prophesying his country's plight in the grip of 20th-century totalitarian bureaucracy. The advent of that grim eventuality — Stalin with all the instruments of repression to hand in an age of instant communication — was the subject of *Children of the Arbat* (1987), Anatoli Rybakov's most celebrated novel.

Describing the lives of a group of young school-leavers, growing up as Rybakov did in the Arbat district of central Moscow and launching out on to the troubled waters of the 1930s, the novel evokes the grim atmosphere of Stalin's most paranoid, most fearsome years. Its account of the Stalin terror has invited comparison with *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1956). Some reviewers even saw a kinship to *War and Peace* in the complexity of its plotting, and Rybakov had to some it down to imply that the Germans had treated the Jews no worse than anyone else.

The advent of Gorbachev and glasnost obviated the need for such trimming. *Korik* was an unimpeachably correct piece of socialist realism, firmly in the mould of Nikolai Ostrovsky's 1930s classic of Communist revolutionary endeavour, *How the Steel was Tempered*. Much admired by Stalin, it spawned a film, a play and a television programme, all scripted by Rybakov.

Its two successors completed a trilogy about the adventures of Misha, while a second trilogy introduced a new character Kosh and his schoolmates coping with adolescent life in the Soviet Union of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

At the same time Rybakov was writing for adults: *Voditell* ("Drivers") appeared in the journal *Oktyabr* in 1950. Its theme, the problems of the workplace and the dignity of the leaders of socialist road haulage, expounded with great technical authenticity from Rybakov's own experience, made it a sure-fire candidate for a Stalin Prize.

In the 1960s Rybakov began work on *Dead Arbat* (translated as *Children of the Arbat*) and in 1966 it was announced that the first part of it was to

be published in the journal *Novy Mir*, whose courageous editor Alexander Tvardovsky had persuaded Khrushchev to let him publish Solzhenitsyn's *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* in 1962.

But by that time the brief Khrushchev thaw was already over and as the conservative Leonid Brezhnev tightened his grip on the reins of Soviet power, the possibility receded even further. An announcement in the next decade that *Oktyabr* would publish the novel was equally illusory, and it was not until the era of Gorbachev that publication could become a reality.

A less obviously contentious, though in the view of many a more subtle, novel *Tyazheliye peski* (translated as *Heavy Sands*) was, however, published by *Oktyabr* in 1978. It had an ostensibly anti-German and therefore pro-Soviet theme, the atrocities committed against Ukrainian Jews by the invading German armies in 1941 and 1942. But in the anti-Semitic climate of the Soviet Union in the late 1970s the theme was not popular, and Rybakov had to tone it down to imply that the Germans had treated the Jews no worse than anyone else.

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MAJOR-GENERAL ROBERT LOUDOUN

Major-General Robert Loudoun, CB, OBE, Representative Colonel, Royal Marines, 1983-84, and Director of the Mental Health Foundation, 1974-80, died on December 28 aged 76. He was born on July 8, 1922.

BOB LOUDOUN'S singularly active military career was more than matched by his achievements after retirement from the Royal Marines. Inspired by an affection for Yugoslavia, acquired during the war, he became in 1989 a director of the British Yugoslav Society. The focus of this institution was shifted by civil war from cultural and student exchanges towards relief aid. Loudoun and other war veterans — some of whom owed their lives to Tito's partisans —

raised funds which sent more than 25 trucks loaded with medical supplies to the stricken six republics. Many were driven by members of the society; at the age of 70 Loudoun himself took a truckload to Korcula, accompanied by the late Sir Fitzroy Maclean and his wife Veronica.

He had also joined the Mental Health Foundation at the time of its formation through the merger of the Mental Health Trust and the Mental Health Research Fund, and became its director in 1977. By the time he retired in 1990, he had raised the foundation's charitable income from about £50,000 a year to well over a million, providing funds for research projects and enabling innovative rehabilitation and community aftercare programmes.

Robert Beverley Loudoun



was educated at University College School, Hampstead, and joined the Royal Marines in late 1940, being selected for officer training in 1941. After the 2nd Battalion had been reorganised as No 43 Commando, it was sent to the Mediterranean in November 1943, and received a brief, effective and almost bloodless

invasion into modern warfare when leading the beach assault at the Anzio bridgehead in January 1944. Having captured its objectives, the commando was withdrawn and redeployed to take a hill on the Garigliano River, suffering its first fatalities.

Even tougher times were to follow. With other units, 43 Commando was sent to the Dalmatian island of Vis, from where it conducted a number of assaults against other islands, which were generally occupied by larger numbers of heavily armed Germans, well dug in.

In charge of the commando's C Company, Loudoun made his first attack on the island of Mijet, which but two days later, he took a launch back by night to recover two lost signallers. He was then wounded during a costly at-

tack on the island of Brac, and was temporarily incapacitated. Brac was subsequently reinforced by more than 2,000 Germans, but a second assault was more successful, and by the autumn of 1944 the Germans had started to pull out of the Balkans.

In October, 43 Commando landed at Dubrovnik and took part in the harrying of the German retreat. After arduous advances against tenacious resistance, with much blowing up of roads and bridges behind the lines, the commando moved to Italy to rest and refit. Loudoun was mentioned in dispatches.

The commando's final major action of the war was the assault across the bleak marshes around Lake Comacchio near the coast north of Ravenna. Loudoun, who was by now adjutant, took part in a bitter and difficult battle throughout April 2 and 3, 1945, with little natural cover to help the advance across minefields towards well-prepared German positions. In this action, the Royal Marines' tenth Victoria Cross — and the only one of the Second World War — was posthumously awarded to Corporal Thomas Hunter.

Appointed to 45 Commando, Loudoun arrived in the Far East shortly after the end of hostilities and served in Hong Kong, Malta, Africa and Palestine. He was granted a regular commission in 1948, thereafter following a conventional progression of appointments.

As a brigadier, his appointment embroiled him in Nazi planning and exercises in Europe, including the initial reconnaissance of north Norway which heralded the Royal Marines' strategic shift to arctic warfare during the later decades of the Cold War.

As a major-general, his final tour was in command of Royal Marines training at Portsmouth, where he masterminded the move of the Royal Marines Museum to its splendid location at Eastney. He was appointed CBE on retirement in 1973.

He is survived by his wife Sue, whom he married in 1950, and their two sons.

George Popov, MBE, acridologist, died on December 22 aged 76. He was born on August 22, 1922.

GEORGE POPOV was one of the great scientific travellers of the past 50 years. He spent most of his life travelling across Asia and Africa studying locusts and grasshoppers, and in pursuit of his entomological interests he steadily became perhaps the most intrepid traveller of his time in the Arabian Peninsula and the remotest regions of Asia and Africa.

In his early years he made an amazing crossing of the Jaz Murian depression in southern Iran in midsummer with a single donkey for company. His achievements were recognised by the award of the Lawrence of Arabia Memorial Medal in 1955 by the Royal Society of Asian Affairs, and in 1957 the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Rome awarded him a special medal for 50 years' work on locust control.

George Basil Popov was born of Russian parents in Mashhad in Iran, where his father worked in the Imperial Bank. After early studies at home he was educated at the American (Albany) College in

Tehran and at Tehran University. His father died at the outbreak of the Second World War, so he had to leave school. Being fluent in Russian, Farsi, French, English (and later Arabic), he became an interpreter. He was then recruited to work for the British Locust Control unit in southern Iran, and so began his lifelong research career. He next became a member of the British Middle East Anti-Locust Unit in 1943, based in Cairo, and from there he travelled extensively in Iran and Saudi Arabia.

After ten years with the Desert Locust Survey and Control Organisation, based in Nairobi, he joined the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Rome in 1958, as leader of a unit carrying out an ecological survey of the desert locust breeding areas from Senegal to Bangladesh and Georgia to Tanzania.

In 1964 he transferred to the Anti-Locust Research Centre in London (later the Centre for Overseas Pesticides Research), from where he undertook consultancies and projects on grasshopper research and control techniques in many parts of Africa and Asia, returning to Nairobi in 1982.

During the last major locust

outbreak, in 1985-86, he advised on monitoring and control methods, principally in the Sahelian countries of North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. He later conducted ground assessments and ecological surveys of the affected areas, leading to the establishment of a data centre and introduction of remote sensing imaging as an aid to monitoring locust populations. He also participated in tests of various insecticides and biological control agents in Mali between 1986 and 1988.

As well as lecturing widely he published more than 50 articles, becoming recognised as one of the foremost acridologists in the world. In 1951 he was appointed MBE.

He was an unassuming man with a delightful sense of humour, but his gentleness concealed a tough core. In recent years, he suffered considerable pain and discomfort from more than one form of cancer, but he showed tremendous courage, continuing to work and travel.

He never married, but had a firm link with a family from Mali now living in London, to whom he was devoted and who were a great support to him for many years.

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FIVE OLD WARSHIPS TO BE SCRAPPED

The Admiralty announcement of the decision to scrap all the battleships of pre-war years except those which are in use as accommodation ships must evoke regrets but no astonishment. Officers and men come to have a sentimental affection for famous ships in which they have served, and the general public, remembering the names of ships that time after time had a part in sea battles or amphibious operations, hear of their passing with no less regret. But the times are gone when warships can be preserved, as Nelson's Victory survives nearly two centuries after she was floated out of the dock in which she was built. A 30,000-ton battleship calls for considerable overhauling and maintenance to keep her afloat, even if she is never again to go to sea.

ON THIS DAY

January 22, 1948

The announcement that the battleships Queen Elizabeth, Valiant, Nelson and Rodney and the battle-cruiser Renown were to be scrapped may have evoked regret but perhaps no astonishment. Three were veterans of the First World War.

There is no hint in this action of any belief by the Admiralty that the day of the battleship as known hitherto is necessarily past. But though in the past obsolete or obsolescent capital ships have had a certain value in war it is difficult in the present state of the navies of the world to see any similar value for those that are to be scrapped today.

There will thus be little valid criticism of the Admiralty's decision to scrap these capital ships; but there may well be complaint of undue reticence regarding the action that is being taken in respect of other ships. Seven cruisers are to be scrapped, but the public is not to be allowed to know their names. A number of lesser warships are also to disappear under a similar veil. Parliament and public are not allowed to know the composition of the Royal Navy today, though it is doubtless well known to any foreign intelligence service that thinks it worth while to find out the facts.

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY JANUARY 22 1999

Board concedes defeat after buyer raises hostile offer and bags 38% stake

Sears backs Green's £548m bid

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM
RETAIL CORRESPONDENT

SIR BOB REID, chairman of Sears, yesterday accepted an approved offer for the retail group worth £548 million, an increase of £29 million from Philip Green and the Barclays twins, David and Frederick.

After a day of talks between the two sides, the Sears board agreed to accept 35p a share from January Investments (JIL). It was set up for the bid by Mr Green and the Barclays.

and had a 340p a share bid rejected last week. Some late buying in the market ensured that by the end of the day, JIL owned 38 per cent of Sears. It already had 23 per cent of Sears in the bag after acceptance by Phillips & Drew last week. The shares closed at 354 1/4p.

Sir Bob said: "The increased cash offer of 35p per share represents a fair deal for shareholders and is in line with the board's strategy to return value to them."

Aidan Barclay, who is the son of David and chairman of

JIL, said: "We are delighted that our increased offer has been recommended unanimously by the board of Sears. We consider that this decision provides both clarity to employees and certainty of a full value to Sears shareholders."

The deal is likely to mean that Sears directors will receive large payouts from their options, which, in most cases, are triggered by a takeover. David Ditty, finance director, could be in line for as much as £1.5 million, while Roger Groom, the property director,

could collect up to £1.18 million. Derek Lovelock, head of the clothing business, could get £697,000 from his options. Sears, which JIL will de-list from the stock market, owns the Freemans catalogue company, the Warehouse, Wallis, and Richards women's wear chain, the Adams children's wear chain, a property business and the Creation credit card business. Sears last week announced the sale of Creation to Banque Nationale de Paris and Cognoga for £141 million. JIL is believed to be consider-

ing continuing with the sale of Creation, and is understood to have held talks about the sale of Freemans with Otto Versand of Germany. N Brown, chaired by Sir David Alliance, is also extremely keen to get its hands on Freemans, which it made one attempt to buy from Sears.

Mr Green, who is chief executive of JIL, said yesterday that he had not pre-sold any part of the company: "I want to go and meet the management of each part of the company," he said, before making any decisions on what would be best for

them. He said that the price had been raised "to save all the uncertainty. We felt it was best to get an agreed deal."

JIL is being partly funded by Mr Green's wife Cristina, and by the Barclays, who own the Ritz hotel as well as The Scotsman, Scotland on Sunday and Sunday Business newspapers. The bulk of the financing comes from loans raised through BankBoston and the Bank of Scotland.

Mr Green's other businesses are Owen Owen, the department store company

based in the North West, and the Mark One chain of discount fashion stores. The terms represent a significant premium to the low of 146 1/4p at which Sears shares traded in October. However, the shares traded at 382p as recently as June 1998. In 1995 the buoyancy of the retail sector and optimism about the outlook for retailers lifted the shares close to 760p.

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BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES	
FTSE 100	6022.3 (-83.3)
Yield	2.72%
FTSE All Share	2729.03 (-31.54)
Nikkei	14245.42 (+217.37)
New York	
Dow Jones	9227.42 (-6.49)
S&P Composite	1246.23 (-10.29)

US RATE	
3-month	4.75% (4.75%)
Federal Funds	101.75 (101.75)
Long bond	5.14% (5.17%)

LONDON MONEY	
3-month interbank	5.75% (5.75%)
Libor long gill	720.08 (119.53)
Future (Mar)	

STERLING

New York	1.8515* (1.8458)
London	
\$	1.8519 (1.8474)
¥	1.4269 (1.4238)
SFr	2.2682 (2.2668)
Yen	188.99 (188.98)
£ index	99.8 (99.8)

DOLLAR	
London	
£	1.1576* (1.1572)
SFr	1.3850* (1.3875)
Yen	113.78* (112.89)
£ index	104.0 (104.3)

Tokyo close Yen 113.07

WORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Apr)	\$10.90 (\$10.85)
GOLD	

London close	\$288.15 (\$286.15)
Exchange rates	Page 28

* denotes midday trading prices

Zeneca shares soar to record

Zeneca shares reached a new high as the company took a big step towards completing its proposed merger with Astra of Sweden. AstraZeneca, as the enlarged pharmaceuticals group will be known, will be Britain's fifth-largest company. Page 26

Beer bid lifted

Marston Thompson & Evershed rejected an increased £290 million offer from Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, setting the scene for what is expected to be a tight finale to this increasingly bitter battle. Page 27; Tempus, page 28

RSA ready with £3.5bn offer for rival GRE

By JASON NISSE

ROYAL & SUNALLIANCE, the giant insurance group, is poised to bid about £3.5 billion for rival Guardian Royal Exchange after being told it has made the highest offer in the auction of the insurer.

The offer, priced at about 390p per GRE share, has topped rival bids from other interested parties such as Axa, the French group, Allianz of Germany and AIG, the US insurance giant. The highest offer was understood to have been no higher than 370p a share. GRE shares were unmoved at 354 1/4p yesterday.

GRE asked Morgan Stanley, the US investment bank, to carry out an auction of the company after receiving informal approaches from various rivals last year.

The group decided the GRE could not continue in its current form — being smaller and more diversified than most rivals. It said it would announce the result of the auction by the end of this month.

RSA — which was itself created by a merger between Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance in 1996 — is to be given exclusive negotiating rights to conclude a deal, though it is not yet in a position to put an offer to shareholders.

Any deal would need to be financed by a rights issue by RSA of up to £2 billion. This might not be well received by the market, given that RSA shares have fallen from a high

of 808p last March to stand at 487p, down 11 1/2p, yesterday. The bid could also face a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and there would be concerns about job losses, which could be as high as 5,000 as RSA integrated GRE's general insurance business.

The market is also concerned about the problems RSA had in merging the Royal and Sun Alliance operations. After the merger, the group had two chief executives, Roger Taylor and Roger Gumble. This structure did not work and both left, with Bob Mendelson being promoted from the US business to become sole chief executive of RSA.

The GRE board, led by new chairman, Sir Colin Chandler, may yet decide that none of the bids put forward give full value to the company. The alternative to selling the company in one go is for GRE to sell its businesses piecemeal.

A circular from HSBC Securities, the broker, published yesterday, suggests that GRE could be worth as much as 473p a share.

AXA has said it is interested in the general insurance business and Prudential is understood to be keen to buy other parts of GRE, including the burgeoning healthcare operation.

Neither GRE nor RSA would comment on what they called "market speculation" last night.



Nick Prettejohn played a key part in the reconstruction and renewal process that saved Lloyd's

Sandler hunts top City job after quitting Lloyd's

By ROBERT COLE, CITY CORRESPONDENT

RON SANDLER is quitting as chief executive of the Lloyd's insurance market. He is being replaced by Nick Prettejohn, a 38-year-old Lloyd's insider.

Mr Sandler has been in the job for four years and is credited with saving the insurance market from collapse. He has not got a job to go and refused to comment about specific future employment possibilities. However, he said: "I would like to return to running a business rather than running a market."

However, he has already been linked with the current vacancy for a chief executive at Barclays Bank. Similar vacancies exist at Cable & Wireless Communications and Bank. Mr Sandler plans to remain at Lloyd's until the summer. He will not receive compensation for loss of office.

During his tenure at Lloyd's Mr Sandler attracted sharp criticism from names, the traditional personal providers of capital backing insurance underwriting, who have been progressively displaced by companies, so-called corporate capital.

Christopher Stockwell, a spokesman for disaffected names, said: "A number of names may miss Mr Sandler's analytical skills but many will not be sorry to see such an ardent supporter of corporate capital move on."

But Michael Deeny, chairman of the Association of Lloyd's Names, the leading names' pressure group, said: "Ron worked hard... and played a vitally important role in saving Lloyd's." He added

that Mr Prettejohn was a "brilliant young man" who he was happy to welcome to the post.

Mr Prettejohn joined the executive team at Lloyd's in 1995 as head of strategy. He is described as playing a key role in the reconstruction and renewal process that saved Lloyd's from oblivion. He was also involved in the development of Equitas, the body that re-insured troublesome pre-1992 losses and was pivotal in the R&R project.

Mr Prettejohn is a graduate of Balliol College, Oxford. He has a first class degree in philosophy, politics and economics. He began his career as a management consultant with Bain & Co, was a director of Apax Partners, the venture capitalist, and also spent a year as director of corporate strategy at NRC, the transport company.

On-Line pair sell £1m shares

By FRASER NELSON

ON-LINE, the Internet games producer whose shares had soared 2,084 per cent this month alone, crashed back to earth yesterday — but only after its directors sold £966,000 of shares.

Michael Hodges and Clement Chambers, co-founders of the company, said they were "forced" to sell their shares at between 176p and 250p apiece to satisfy market demand.

The shares, which started the month at 124p, fell 144 1/2p to 129p yesterday and are expected to drop further today.

Mr Hodges raised £240,000 in cash from disposing of 100,000 shares. Three weeks ago, the same stake would have raised £12,500.

Mr Hodges said Mr Chambers, who has sold a total of £726,000 in shares, has agreed to exercise newly-granted share options — effectively hanging on to £246,000 in shares after passing the mon-

ey to the company. Mr Hodges is keeping the money he raised from the sale.

Analysts and dealers have been baffled by the surge in On-Line shares. They are amazed that the company did not suggest creating new shares for a public offering at its Wednesday meeting, rather than allowing the directors to sell.

One said: "The two of them have just earned enough to retire on, and they are saying 'this hurts us more than it hurts you'. The whole thing is bizarre."

Their disposals were carried out on Wednesday, when On-Line shares hit their high of 273 1/2p.

The deals were not announced until after the market had closed yesterday.

Mr Hodges and Mr Chambers own 65 per cent of the company's shares between them. It is now capitalised at £4.2 million.

Bank loans at record level

By JANET BUSSE, ECONOMICS EDITOR

BANK lending to house buyers set a record in December, usually a slow month, suggesting that cuts in interest rates have breathed new life into the housing market.

The British Bankers' Association said the figures, showing a record £12.1 billion increase in net mortgage lending, were "remarkable". Separate figures from the Building Societies Association also tended to point to a revival in the housing market with mortgage approvals up in December.

Bank lending increased overall by £5.5 billion, far above the recent monthly average of £2.95 billion, the BBA said. The strength was not just in mortgage lending, with demand for credit from industry and commerce, particularly among property and construction companies, rising.

Some of the growth in mortgage lending resulted from re-financing, according to the

BBA, but nevertheless December's rise was well above the recent monthly average of £1 billion, suggesting an element of genuine new demand.

Yesterday's figures from building societies were not as buoyant overall as those from banks, suggesting that banks may be gaining market share. The BBA said that gross mortgage advances totalled £14.9 billion in December compared with £16.2 billion in November while net advances fell to £12.0 billion from £53.4 million.

Adrian Coles, BSA director-general, said that, given the scope for further interest rate cuts, borrowers might find the housing market particularly affordable this year.

Separate figures from the Bank of England showed that M4 broad money supply rose 0.3 per cent in December. The annual rate of growth fell to 8 per cent from 8.3 per cent, the lowest level since June 1995.

Sixth chief goes at Laura Ashley

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

LAURA ASHLEY, the troubled retail company, lost its sixth chief executive since 1990 yesterday, but gained the Rev Pat Robertson, the well-known television evangelist and former US presidential hopeful, as a non-executive director.

Mr Robertson, who has extensive business interests, is believed to have been asked to join the board by John Thornton, the Laura Ashley chairman, and a senior banker at Goldman Sachs. Mr Robertson is also believed to know Kay Peng Khoo, the chairman and chief executive of Malaysian United Industries (MUI), which owns 40 per cent of Laura Ashley. Dr Khoo is also to become a non-executive director.

Mr Robertson holds two million shares — equivalent to about 0.5 per cent — in the firm of 400,000 American Depository Receipts.

Victoria Egan, who was chief executive for just five

months, is leaving for personal reasons having found it difficult to settle in London.

Mrs Egan, who previously worked for MUI, took over from David Hoare, the company director who was asked to stabilise the company after the departure of Ann Iverson, the high-profile American who launched an ill-advised expansion into the US.

Mrs Egan will be replaced by Kwan Cheong Ng, a Laura Ashley non-executive director who runs the retailing arm of MUI.

The company revealed some disastrous trading figures yesterday. In the 24 weeks to January 16, like-for-like sales were down 13 per cent. Total sales were down 16 per cent.

Mrs Iverson's US expansion is being slowly unravelled. By the end of this month it will have closed or relocated 19 of the 32 larger stores. Laura Ashley shares slipped 1p to 12p, compared with 21p in 1997.

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When fast talking had to stop



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

So Sears has gone. Can Laura Ashley be far behind? These two companies have far more in common than the desperate "Sale" signs currently splashed across their shop windows. Both are sorry tales of inept management and ineffective shareholders. The current retail downturn may have added to their problems but in both cases, it is the company and not the consumer that is culpable for shredding shareholder value.

Between them, they have provided lavish rewards to some of the most incompetent chief executives ever to have been given desks. Just imagine how much faster either company might have been brought to its knees had it been able to employ both Liam Strong and Anne Iverson simultaneously. What a wonderful double act that would have been: Mr Strong deploying rafts of expensive consultants to devise duff — but expensive — strategies and Ms Iverson rolling them out into huge new, unwanted, stores, pausing only to don her leathers and pose for Vogue.

The boards of both companies were bamboozled by their fast-talking chief executives, although Laura Ashley was at least quick to spot the flaws in Ms Iverson's tactics than Sears was in rumbling Liam Strong. Sir Bob Reid supported Strong when his failings as a leader and a manager were painfully clear to the outside world. But Sir Bob

tends to take a blinkered view of life. His non-executives appear to be completely blindfolded, for they sat and watched as the business that Sir Charles Clow had built up was gradually shrunk to its current pitiful state. Lord Tebbit may have been a feisty politician but he sat on the Sears board for 12 years without, apparently, raising a voice of dissent.

Despite Sir Bob Reid's recent insistence that Sears shares were worth between 65 and 68 pence, he recommended an offer of 35p as "a fair deal for shareholders". It certainly represents the fairest treatment they have had for some time. Given Philip Green's reputation as one of the sharpest operators, it is worth noting that, not so long ago, the shares languished below 15p. If he is now prepared to pay so much more, he clearly has every confidence that he can extract the sort of valuation that Sir Bob talked about.

Watching Mr Green and his backers make his profits will inevitably be palling for Sears shareholders but those who have only themselves to blame. Even after the fiasco of the Pacia deal, they allowed Sir Bob to remain at the

helm of the incredibly shrinking Sears ship.

If Sir Bernard Ashley had been removed from the scene sooner, Laura Ashley might not have been such a miserable tale. But he at least had the excuse of a huge shareholding to justify his interfering. His views on what has happened since are probably unprintable. Ditto the Malaysian investors who were persuaded to bail it out last time.

Heavy weather for insurance bidders

Guardian Royal Exchange's future should have been settled by now, eight weeks after the smallest of the independent composite insurers acknowledged that it was in play. But the haggling still goes on.

Three years ago, when Royal and Sun Alliance were pondering their merger, much of the in-

dustry was enjoying a healthy recovery in profit. Even a year ago, when Commercial Union and General Accident popped the question to each other, things were not too bad.

Margins on general insurance have now relaxed, along with most of the share prices, making it much harder to offer investors an attractive package. While other sectors boom, insurers never bounced back from the late summer post-Russia mini-crash. Even GRE, buoyed largely by bid hopes, trades a quarter below its 1998 high of 475p a share.

Sun Life and Provincial, backed by its ambitious French parent AXA, has seen its share price keep up but the early favourite seems disinclined to play a premium price for GRE and has been ruled out, along with other try-on bidders. That has left the field for Royal & Sun Alliance, which ought to be prepared to pay more.

With a market value only half that of Allied Zurich, for example, RSA desperately needs to bulk itself up to have any chance of surviving as one of the big global insurance players. And there is a lot of overlap to maximise cost cutting. But RSA cannot afford a hostile bid for GRE.

After the high hopes of 1996, RSA rapidly lost friends by failing to sort out in advance the management of the merged group, resulting in the chiefs of both previous companies being stripped of power a year ago. Bob Mendelson, who was brought over from the US operation to speed up the £175 million a year of planned cost cuts, has yet to see the fruits of his labours.

At this tricky point, a strikingly timed circular from HSBC has bolstered lingering resistance in the GRE camp. HSBC urges institutional shareholders not to allow themselves to be short-changed by a cheap bid or carve-up. It is aiming for 430p a share, valuing GRE at £3.8 billion, rather

than the £3 billion some rejected suitors had in mind.

At that price, a bidder would have to add value to GRE's jewels, such as the PPP sickness insurer, rather than just wield the axe. Anyone who tries will have to do a lot of convincing lobbying in hostile City parlours.

The insurance market's saviour

Ron Sandler deserves a decent send-off when he departs from Lloyd's this summer. He may only have served four years but they were crucial years for the survival of the insurance market. Mr Sandler and Sir David Rowland rarely acknowledged just how close to extinction Lloyd's was, but they laboured mightily to achieve the settlements with the names and the new investment that would enable the market to survive.

South African Sandler might not have attracted the same headlines as his predecessor, the eccentric Peter Middleton, but he did get the job done. Mr Middleton, famous as the motor-bike riding former monk, made a hasty escape to Salomon Brothers but

did not appear to settle there any more than he did at Lloyd's.

Mr Sandler's experience in sorting out Lloyd's might have made him the perfect catch for Barclays, still in search of a chief executive. He has probably been asked. But it seems that, like his predecessor, he is attracted to the world of investment banking, and is unlikely to have any trouble in landing the sort of globe-trotting role that will bring him a decent salary.

It will be intriguing to see whether he will want to venture some of his money on becoming a Lloyd's name. Sandler had little sympathy for those names who enjoyed the profits while they flowed but refused to pay up when fortune turned nasty. Lloyd's is now chasing them and, like Sandler, means business.

On-Line honesty

THE directors of On-Line clearly enjoy a joke. The chuckling was almost audible yesterday as they owned up to the fact that they are not really a whizzy, Internet-oriented business after all. Having sold some of their hugely overvalued shares, they could afford a spot of honesty. But the spirit of openness is unlikely to be contagious. Investors need to tread warily as they try and pick Internet winners. Arcadia's £1 million of Internet sales amount to a promising start but not a whole new personality.

Mobil's spending cut by \$600m

Weak oil prices have forced Mobil to cut current-year spending plans by \$600 million (£364 million), and the company has given warning that oil production will fall in 1999.

The US oil company, which has agreed an \$80 billion merger with the rival Exxon, has pruned its project portfolio and given warning that its 1999 budget may be cut further if oil prices fail to improve.

Mobil said its 1999 capital budget would be \$4.8 billion, down 11 per cent from last year. Drilling will continue in the new West of Shetlands area. Mobil's warning coincided with better than expected earnings from Exxon. It suffered a 40 per cent fall in fourth-quarter net profits, to \$1.5 billion, but earnings on a comparable basis were only 30 per cent down, less than the 50 per cent fall analysts forecast.

VAT ruling

Car leasing and trading companies had a setback in the European Court yesterday when the Advocate General backed UK Customs and Excise's rights to limit recovery of VAT on cars. Ugs, to £15 billion, could be at stake including back-dated claims by the companies. The court's final judgment, which usually follows the Advocate General's opinion, will be made later this year.

Cisco invests

Cisco Systems, the US technology giant, is making a £10 million investment in Scotland by unveiling a European research and development centre in Edinburgh, and starting its first European manufacturing in Livingston. The investment could create up to 160 jobs. The research centre is to develop software technology for world markets.

Krug for LVMH

LVMH, the French luxury goods group, has bought the Krug champagne business from the Rémy Cointreau drinks company for £1 billion (£807 million). LVMH products include Dom Perignon champagne and Louis Vuitton leather goods.

Bank's £19m buy

Brown Shipley, the merchant bank, is to buy Henry Cooke, the Oxf-traded investment manager, for £19.6 million. More than half of Cooke's shareholders have already accepted the deal.

Bitter end near as Marston's rejects new Wolves' offer

By DOMINIC WALSH

MARSTON Thompson & Evershed yesterday rejected an increased offer from Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, setting the scene for what is expected to be a tight finale to this increasingly bitter battle.

Wolves raised its offer from 282p a share to 306.1p — valuing its prey at around £290 million — and raised the amount of cash it is offering to 230p compared to 182p under its original offer in November. The balance will be paid in shares.

However, Nick Letcher, Marston's chief executive, said the bid was "predicated on a flawed strategy that has consistently destroyed value and should be rejected". He pointed out that Wolves' revised estimate of cost savings — up from £12 million to £17 million — was still well short of the £24 million of synergy benefits promised by Marston in its own £330 million counterbid for Wolves.

Most analysts expect the new offer from Wolves to be accepted, although some expressed disappointment at the level of the increase. One said: "I was hoping for around 315p a share, so this is far from a knockout bid. It looks as though any view is that Wolves should get it — just."

David Thompson, managing director of Wolves, said the revised offer was fair in that it represented a premium of 77 per cent over the Marston's share price prior to market speculation of a deal, and 54



David Thompson, left, managing director of Wolverhampton & Dudley, with financial director Ralph Findlay

per cent higher than the day before it finally launched its bid two months ago.

Mr Thompson dismissed Marston's so-called Pac-Man counterbid as "expensive" and "high-risk", adding: "It purports to address industry consolidation, but is in fact disintegration, downgrading and dilution."

He also cast doubt on its ability to deliver £24 million of cost savings without damaging the future prospects of the business.

He also launched a fierce attack on Mr Letcher for failing to follow a consistent strategy. He claimed that while the

Marston's counterbid envisaged the retention of its Burton brewery, where it makes Pedigree bitter, this was "quite at odds with their recent offer to sell it to us". He said he had been offered the brewery twice over the past 12 months.

Marston's shareholders

have until February 4 to decide whether to accept the raised offer. However, analysts expect Mr Letcher to respond by raising his own counterbid or, at the very least, to increase the cash element of the offer.

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Arcadia rebounds on news of 300 job cuts

ARCADIA, the clothing retail group, is cutting its head office staff by 300. The cuts at its West End headquarters came through 170 redundancies, with the rest resulting from a hiring freeze (Sarah Cunningham writes).

John Hoerner, chief executive,

said the jobs being axed are "members of the management committee, all the way down". They will cost the company £3.5 million but should save it £8 million a year.

Mr Hoerner said that he had had it in mind to slim the organi-

sation at some point, after the demerger from Debenhams last year. He had accelerated the operation in an effort to bring down costs. Arcadia's shares rebounded from their lows yesterday, rising 50.4p to 167.9p.

Its shares plunged in December after a profits warning and as analysts became worried that the group's high fixed costs made it particularly vulnerable to a downturn in sales.

The group, which is behind the Dorothy Perkins, Top Shop, Top Man, Evans, Principles, Racing Green and Hawkhead brands, said yesterday that sales per square foot were down 1.9 per cent in the 20 weeks to January 16. Total sales, including new space, were up 0.3 per cent. Home shopping and Internet sales have fared better.



John Hoerner brought forward the cuts to reduce costs

L&G among the top ten fund managers

By RICHARD MILES AND CAROLINE MERRELL

LEgal & General has galloped into the top ten institutional fund managers by attracting more than £11 billion of new business to its index-tracking funds in 1998.

The composite insurer said yesterday that funds under management had grown to £77 billion (£57 billion) as trustees switched to "more consistent and cheaper products".

Mandates of £250 million or more accounted for a third of the new business, largely at the expense of Garmore or Phillips & Drew. The growth helped Legal & General's total group assets to swell to £79 billion from £62 billion.

Worldwide sales of life and pension policies rose 21 per cent to £494 million. UK sales in-

creased 16 per cent to £341 million. Single-premium business showed the most improvement, up 23 per cent in UK life and pensions to £1.4 billion, continuing a decade-long trend away from regular premium payments. Single premium payments jumped 31 per cent to £755 million.

But David Prosser, group chief executive, sounded a note of caution: "We wouldn't be immune from any fall in consumer confidence. But the fourth quarter held up pretty well. We have not seen any significant falling away in business."

New business at Zurich Financial Services rose 18 per cent last year, boosted by sales through independent financial advisers. ZFS, comprising Allied Dunbar,

Eagle Star, Zurich and Threadneedle, the fund manager, is hoping this year to continue to increase its sales through IFAs. Brian Thomas, Zurich Financial Services finance director, said: "We are on record as saying that we are looking for an acquisition in this sector."

New premiums at the Allied Dunbar salesforce grew by 5 per cent to £240 million, while net new business through the IFA channel grew by 42 per cent to £155 million.

Threadneedle, which provides the fund management for the group's products and offers its services to third parties, attracted £439 million of UK single premium investment funds.

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Shortage of phones alarming for JWE

By CHRIS AYRES

A SHORTAGE of pre-pay mobile phones over Christmas caused JWE Telecom, the Yorkshire mobile phone retailer and distributor, to issue a profit warning yesterday.

The shares fell 23 per cent to 163p after it said it had sold just 16,000 handsets during December, 4,000 short of its target.

John Weatherill, JWE's chairman, said: "Reduced margins on pre-pay phones and the inability of supply to meet demand will result in profits growth being below what we had hoped to achieve."

"However, trading has been very strong and we are well positioned to take advantage of the growth predicted in the sector in the current year and beyond."

JWE has 50 retail outlets following its acquisition of Midland Phones.

For the six months to October 2, pre-tax profits grew by 5 per cent to £414,000, while sales rose 36 per cent to £12 million. Earnings per share were 1.53p, down nearly 7 per cent from 1.64p. There is an interim dividend of 0.65p, the first since the company's float early last year.

Bear necessity for ELC recovery

By MANUS COSTELLO

BARNEY the talking teddy bear came to the rescue of the Early Learning Centre over Christmas, it emerged yesterday. John Menzies, the distribution company that owns ELC, said sales of the interactive bear, which can learn and repeat phrases, surpassed expectations, leaving ELC close to breaking even for the full year after successive years of losses.

ELC sold 17,000 bears over Christmas, at £100 each, contributing £1.7 million to sales which were up 15 per cent like-for-

like in the four weeks before Christmas. Last year ELC posted a £6.7 million loss.

However, Menzies, which sold its newsgents to WH Smith last year, still plans to sell ELC in the near future to focus on its core business, distribution, and to continue the move into airport support services.

Menzies' pre-tax profits for the six months to October 31 rose to £1.2 million (£500,000) on a turnover of continuing operations of £502.1 million (£582.4 million). Earnings per share were 2.3p (loss of 1.2p) and the interim dividend remains at 4.8p a share.

The results were hit by a poor perfor-

mance from THE Home Entertainments, the music, video and book distributor. The group has set aside an exceptional charge of £15 million in the second half to reorganise the subsidiary.

David Mackay, John Menzies chief executive, called the situation at THE "unacceptable". He said: "We got it badly wrong in the last year and the buck stops with me." He said group second-half profits were likely to be "much closer to last year's performance than they were in the first half."

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Costly drugs and mobile phones offer no cure for faltering market

Paul Durman
says price still matters for 'future stocks' behind the asset bubble

Here is a favourite fact from Phillips & Drew, the bearish fund manager. If every man, woman and child in the UK had a mobile phone, and all of them made £250 of calls a year, the industry's total revenue would still be only a third of the stock market value of the UK's mobile phone companies.

This back-of-the-envelope calculation was done before Vodafone's £40 billion takeover offer for AirTouch of the US drove the telecom sector's share prices to even more extreme levels.

Vodafone's share price is two and a half times what it was at the start of last year, and, at £35 billion, the company is now worth more than ten times this year's sales and about 50 times its forecast profits.

Orange, yet to make a profit, has quadrupled in value and is now worth £11 billion. BT is still dominated by traditional telephony but even it has seen its share price double.

Most extraordinary of all is the rise and rise of COLT Telecom. COLT's sales last year will have barely reached £30 million but it is already in the top half of the FTSE100 and is valued at £7.9 billion — more than big, long-established companies such as Bass, Salford and Alliance & Leicester.

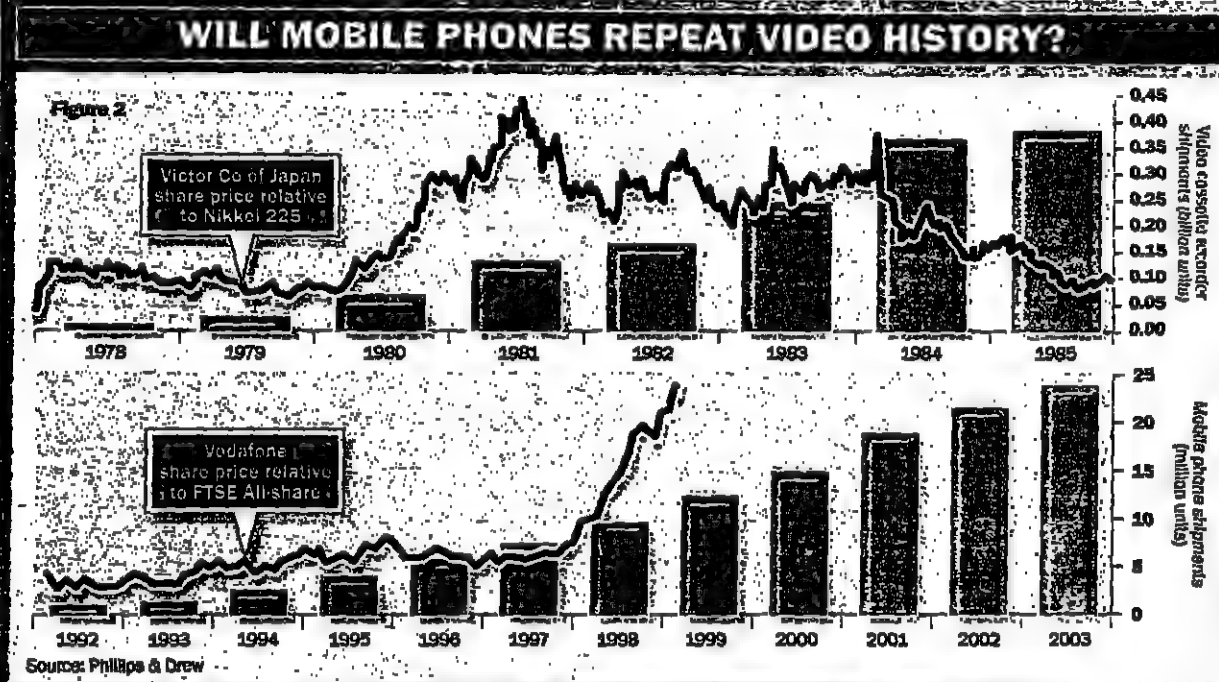
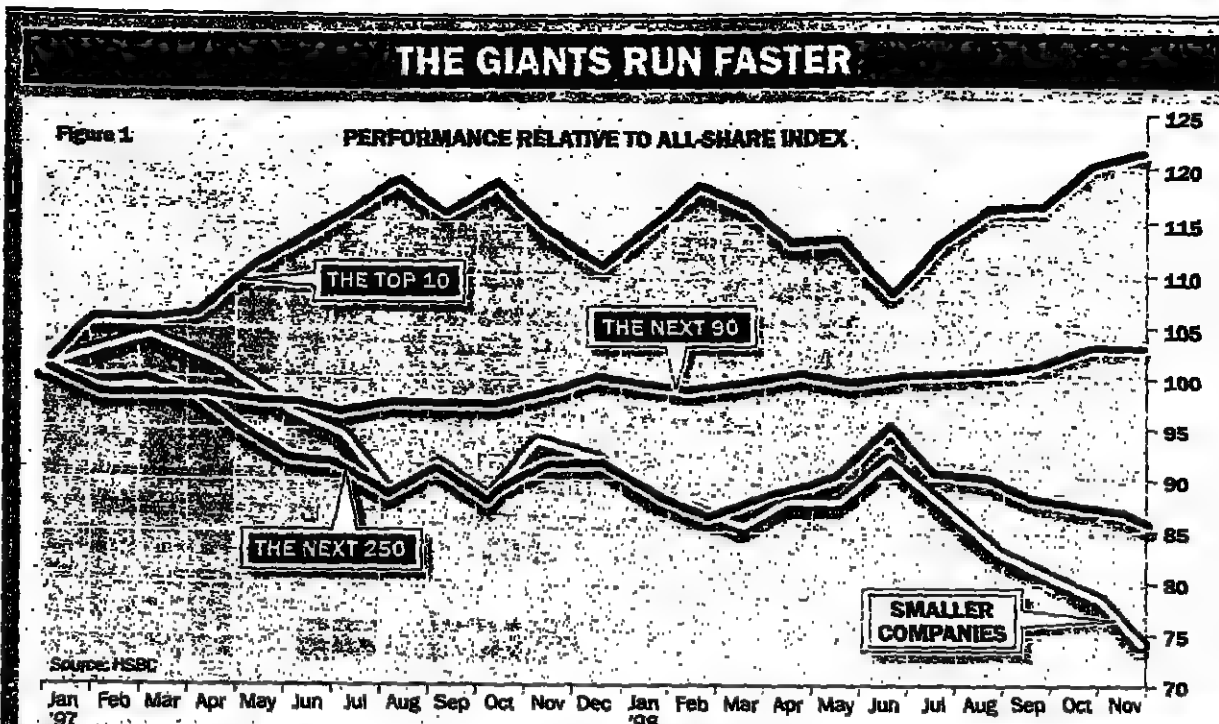
COLT has prompted many investors and commentators to wonder whether the market has taken leave of its senses, but still the onward rush continues. Investor enthusiasm does extend beyond the telecoms sector but only as far as pharmaceuticals and (less importantly) Internet-related stocks — which, bizarrely, has turned out to mean previously unloved retailers such as Dixons and WH Smith.

The investment logic is that in a low-inflation world, struggling with recession in Asia and other emerging economies, investors are desperate to find "growth stocks" whose businesses will prosper in a downturn. And telecoms, healthcare and the Internet form a Holy Trinity of industries with unquestionable growth potential.

Even though telecom groups are battling with rapid technological change, pharmaceutical companies are facing patent expiries and fierce pricing pressures, and Internet firms have yet to figure out how to make a profit, it seems no price is too high for these hallowed stocks. Price/earnings ratios (when there are earnings on which to calculate them) have soared far above historical norms.

Rob Waugh, assistant director at Phillips & Drew, said: "We are watching this market with disbelief."

P&D's clients have suffered because of the firm's cautious stance on the market in recent years. With big stakes in BTR, Coors Virella and Sears, it is accused of buying the history of the stock market rather than its future. Nonetheless, the P&D



analysis — shared in part by many leading active managers — continues to pose difficult questions for telecoms fans.

The exceptional performance of a handful of very big companies is distorting what is going on in the UK stock market. Since the Russian economic crisis split over into Western financial markets last August, the FTSE 100 has climbed back to almost record levels.

However, Phillips & Drew argues, this is almost entirely due to the unjustified rise in the price of the largest companies. Much of the FTSE 100 is actually trading sideways or even in a bear market.

This can be seen from figure 1. It shows that the FTSE 100's outperformance of the wider stock market during 1997 and 1998 was almost entirely due to the ten largest companies. The

rest of the index barely kept pace. The escalating value of the big ten is scarcely explained by their profits performance. Table 2 suggests the largest companies will, on average, report a 6 per cent decline in profits for their latest financial year, largely because of the collapsing oil price and Glaxo Wellcome's loss of Zantac sales.

Glaxo's profits are predicted to bounce back strongly this year because of a series of new drugs. But does this justify the 150 per cent rise in the share price since the start of 1997?

Its p/e ratio relative to the FTSE All-share index — a measure of its expensiveness compared with the rest of the stock market — doubled to about 1.5 between 1994 and the start of 1998. But since then it has soared even further, recently peaking at 2.75. The stampede of the

giant companies is being driven by sheer weight of money. In part this comes from the US: investment managers awash with mutual fund cash are turning to Europe. Many are restricting their buying to the largest 200 or so companies.

More important still is the growing influence of indexation. More and more investors are buying shares in the biggest companies simply because they are the biggest companies. This can be self-perpetuating as Vodafone and COLT rise through the ranks of the FTSE 100, they attract an ever greater weight of funds.

This phenomenon extends well beyond true index funds. Actively managed pension funds, tired of underperform-

ing, have moved closer and closer to an index weighting. An analysis by Schroder Securities showed pension funds were significantly underweight in the big four sectors of oil, drugs, telecoms and banks at the end of 1998. But since then, closed indexing has prompted pension funds to increase their weighting in these sectors from 37 to 96 per cent.

Mr Waugh said: "Everyone's been hit too hard. Nobody can afford to take their own positions any more. They are saying: 'We can't take the pain. Let's just buy the bloody things.'"

Part of the problem is the cult of equity. Investors are so comfortable with the idea of better returns from stock market investment that they find it hard to imagine how they might lose

company such as Glaxo Wellcome. Yes, the shares may fall in the short term, but in the long run shares will always outperform other investments, won't they? Price becomes almost an irrelevance.

Table 1 shows how badly flawed this thinking has proved in the past. It shows the performance over seven years of ten well-known members of the Nifty 50 — the great US corporations that turned in barnstorming performances in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Companies such as McDonalds, Disney and IBM continued to produce respectable profits, but the share prices of these (and all the other examples) declined as the stock market underwent a massive de-rating. The p/e ratios of the Nifty 50 fell by almost 80 per cent.

Mobile phones and the Internet are exciting opportunities, but stock markets have seen many new technologies in the past — and have frequently overvalued them. Figure 2 shows the tremendous growth in JVC's share price that attended the arrival of the video cassette recorder. But while VCR sales continued to grow, JVC's share price went into reverse as competition drove down returns. Can Vodafone really retain its huge margins, or is it facing the same fate?

Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, whose reading of financial markets is almost universally applauded, sounds regular warnings about stock market levels. This week he said the high level of US share prices "would appear to envision substantially greater growth of profits than has been experienced of late". Despite shrinking profit forecasts and the economic problems in Brazil and elsewhere, the markets in the US and UK have repeatedly brushed off such cautions. UK stocks were this week trading at a record multiple of profits.

Meanwhile, markets continue to display behaviour which, if not irrational, is certainly highly peculiar. The startling rises of any company that can claim a link with the Internet is the most obvious example.

Daily market movements of more than 100 points have become routine as price volatility has risen sharply. For the bears, these are danger signals.

Even those who sympathise with this analysis find it hard to imagine what will bring the bull run to an end — particularly because of the weight of money pouring into the markets from US retail savings. The markets have shrugged off the October 1997 scare, Russia, Long Term Capital Management and now Brazil.

Phillips & Drew argues that the support from the "weight of money" is illusory. It really indicates a preference for people to hold liquid assets. The US savings ratio has dropped so low it has turned negative — surely an unsustainable position.

Most investors find it hard to conceive that the market might fall by more than 10 or perhaps 20 per cent. After all, the economic outlook in many Western economies remains relatively sanguine.

However, with the largest companies trading at such racy prices, the risk is that when the bubble bursts the ensuing crash will be similarly extravagant. The US economy looks almost invulnerable — just like Japan ten years ago.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Imperative that US sets example on free trade

From Mr L. Rampersaud, Sir, The article published on January 13, 1999, titled "US facing trade war with Japan and Europe" illustrates America's "true" commitment to free trade. It reinforces the view that the GATT and indeed its son, the WTO, was only set up for the gains of its designers.

Indeed, while the US was unchallenged as an economic power, it sought to open international markets for its exports; when its economic strength, at least in relative terms, started to shrink it was less keen. This is precisely what can be seen from Charles Barshefsky's mercantilist view on Japanese steel imports.

From a country that is meant to be committed to free trade, we are seeing escalating protectionism and strong reminders of the 1980s when charges of dumping were the protectionist's weapon of choice and nearly 80 per cent of all actions brought against foreign competitors were anti-dumping cases. The Uruguay Round neglected this issue because the negotiators with the most muscle, the US and what was then the EC, broadly agreed to make the anti-dumping code in GATT more effective. We should be wary of terms like "more effective" which under closer inspection actually mean "more protectionist". It is important that the fundamental basis for trade must not be lost sight of: that it is relatively cheaper to produce goods in some countries than others.

The real task for the future of trade talks is how it should deal with the emergence of regionalism. If we are to avoid regional trade wars dominated by the US, Japan and Europe, the leading governments in our world economy should not stray from the liberalist principles of the trade talks.

The weakening of the multilateral approach has been gradual and by neglect through the accumulation of ad hoc decisions to protect specific sectors. These departures from the original design of free trade agreements have created a period of instability and uncertainty in international trade relations. It is essential for the US to set an example as indeed your City Editor points out on January 13: "the open trading system depends on that American commitment."

Yours faithfully, Luke Rampersaud, 79 Cliffsea Grove, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 1NG.

From Mr Ian McCartney, Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry Sir, The Working Time Directive (Commentary, January 8 and 9) gives the basic rights to workers that most people take for granted, but which have been denied to far too many for far too long.

Many agency workers work part time in order to balance work and family life. They need regular rest breaks and paid leave just as much as anyone else. That is why the Government has included them in the scope of the Working Time Directive.

Agencies already keep a note of their workers' hours. The only extra requirement is to ensure that staff do not work more than 48 hours a week on average without them agreeing in advance to do so. And providing paid leave on a pro rata basis in no way should need a doubling of charges. The best companies provide paid leave, rest breaks and a sensible working week because they recognise that people need time away from the workplace.

Workers in other European countries benefit from the Working Time Directive. Its introduction into the UK was long overdue.

IAN MCCARTNEY, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET.

From Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale Sir, I would like to rectify one point in your Commentary of January 7. I am not questioning the essence of the Panel on Takeovers and Mergers. I do question its present operational practice in terms of enforcement of its own spirit, Principles and Rules, and its executive structure which ignores the "Rule against Bias".

I do believe that he or she must be seen to be impartial. It is relevant that the Panel itself recognises the need for impartiality in Section 1(e) of the introduction to the Code. It could also recognise this at the executive level as there are three deputy directors general who would have to act if the director general were indisposed. They could therefore surely act if there is a potential conflict of interest.

Yours faithfully, WOLFSON, The Great Universal Stores, Leonfield House, Curzon Street W1Y 7FL.

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CHANGING TIMES

Latin prep

AS WE pointed out in the Commentary yesterday, Bernard Asher may be relieved that he did not release Lomrho Africa's awful results before shareholders rejected Blakeney Management's attempts to oust him as the company's chairman. But it appears he is not out of the jungle yet.

The company's first annual general meeting since demerging from Lomrho is to take place next month. Mr Asher is not up for re-election, arguing that he does not need to stand as he survived the EGM vote. However,

I understand that a number of legal experts are already pouring over the company's articles of association and the Companies Act to see if this is actually the case. If it is not Mr Asher may have to face his shareholders for a second time.

Meanwhile, Blakeney has not gone away. Miles Mordant, the fund manager's boss, tells me that he was going to send out a detailed press release attacking Lomrho Africa's results but decided merely to say "Res ipsa loquitur", which is Latin for "the thing speaks for itself".



The clock's for long service — I've been here nearly three months!

WITH the departure of Victoria Egan from Laura Ashley only five months after she arrived, it seems that the clothing retailer has decided on spring and autumn chief executives.

Sole invites

THOSE boys at Belgo Group are an odd lot. The invitations that have gone out for the opening of the new Belgo restaurant in New York at the end of this month are attached to a variety of clearly well-worn shoes. I'm told that this has got something to do with a Belgian beer that is traditionally served in an expensive wooden stand. Apparently, the waiters would only serve you the beer if you handed



over a shoe, the theory being that you would get your shoe back once you'd handed the wooden stand back.

What's more, following in the vein of its two London restaurants, Belgo Noord and Belgo Centraal, the new venue is to be called Belgo Nieuw York. The boys have also come up with a bizarre spelling for their new Vietnamese-style restaurant opening in March in London's Percy Street. It will be called Bamboo (sic).

Rothschild joy

I UNDERSTAND that the Champagne corks are popping at the Paris office of NM Rothschild (OK, OK I know that the Paris office is called Rothschild et Cie, get off my back). The reason for this jollity is that Rothschild has emerged as the top bank in French mergers and acquisi-

tions for 1998, according to the appropriately but unconvincingly named magazine *Fusions & Acquisitions*. The rise of the house of Rothschild has caused much consternation in Paris, as it signals once and for all the decline of Lazard Frères, the merchant bank that was once so powerful that it virtually ran France. In 1997 Lazard was eclipsed by Goldman Sachs. Un blip, suggested local experts. But in the following year Lazard was pushed back into third, with Goldman second.

All this is seen as more power to the elbow of David de Rothschild, heir apparent to Sir Evelyn as leader of the family bank and founder of Rothschild et Cie. But also watch out for the Paris dealmaker, Edward de Rothschild — David's half brother.

TRIPPING down Piccadilly the other day I thought I might pop into Simpson's to pick up some bargains in the "Good buy" sale. But what is this I hear over the piped music? The 1970s hit I Will Survive by Gloria Gaynor. Alas, as Simpson's is to close and will become a branch of Waterstones, it won't.

Single success

AS Neil Kinnock and John Kettle have proved, nothing improves your image among yoo! quite as much as featuring in a pop song. Remember Tracey Ullman's version of *They Don't Know* — or Tribe of Toff's John Kettle is a Weatherman? Phil White, chief executive of National

Express, had hoped for similar stardom when he learned that The Divine Comedy (a pop group, by the way) was releasing a single called *National Express*. He played the CD to analysts, gave it away to the press, and offered to appear in the video for a cameo role — maybe as a bus driver.

Alas, the group have decided to shoot the entire video in a mental hospital with the lead singer being wheeled around acting like a madman. The main reference to buses comes in a gratuitously rude line about a stewardess. Never mind — there's always the hope of a remake of *On The Buses*.

JASON NISSÉ



Neil Hannon of The Divine Comedy: on the buses

30 EQUITY PRICES

Equities down on Brazil fears

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES					
121	120	Alfred Dunhill	470	-3	54.123
122	121	B&W	304	-1	82.126
123	122	Diageo	145	-1	11.117
124	123	Heineken	145	-1	11.117
125	124	Heineken	145	-1	11.117
126	125	Heineken	145	-1	11.117
127	126	Heineken	145	-1	11.117
128	127	Heineken	145	-1	11.117
129	128	Heineken	145	-1	11.117
130	129	Heineken	145	-1	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
BANKS					
131	130	ABN-AMRO	120	-2	11.117
132	131	ABN-AMRO	120	-2	11.117
133	132	ABN-AMRO	120	-2	11.117
134	133	ABN-AMRO	120	-2	11.117
135	134	ABN-AMRO	120	-2	11.117
136	135	ABN-AMRO	120	-2	11.117
137	136	ABN-AMRO	120	-2	11.117
138	137	ABN-AMRO	120	-2	11.117
139	138	ABN-AMRO	120	-2	11.117
140	139	ABN-AMRO	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
BREWERIES, PUBS & REST.					
141	140	Asahi Breweries	120	-2	11.117
142	141	Asahi Breweries	120	-2	11.117
143	142	Asahi Breweries	120	-2	11.117
144	143	Asahi Breweries	120	-2	11.117
145	144	Asahi Breweries	120	-2	11.117
146	145	Asahi Breweries	120	-2	11.117
147	146	Asahi Breweries	120	-2	11.117
148	147	Asahi Breweries	120	-2	11.117
149	148	Asahi Breweries	120	-2	11.117
150	149	Asahi Breweries	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
ELECTRICITY					
151	150	British Energy	120	-2	11.117
152	151	British Energy	120	-2	11.117
153	152	British Energy	120	-2	11.117
154	153	British Energy	120	-2	11.117
155	154	British Energy	120	-2	11.117
156	155	British Energy	120	-2	11.117
157	156	British Energy	120	-2	11.117
158	157	British Energy	120	-2	11.117
159	158	British Energy	120	-2	11.117
160	159	British Energy	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
BUILDING MATERIALS					
161	160	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
162	161	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
163	162	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
164	163	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
165	164	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
166	165	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
167	166	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
168	167	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
169	168	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
170	169	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
CHEMICALS					
171	170	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
172	171	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
173	172	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
174	173	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
175	174	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
176	175	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
177	176	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
178	177	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
179	178	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
180	179	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
ENGINEERING					
181	180	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
182	181	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
183	182	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
184	183	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
185	184	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
186	185	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
187	186	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
188	187	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
189	188	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
190	189	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
CONSTRUCTION					
191	190	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
192	191	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
193	192	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
194	193	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
195	194	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
196	195	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
197	196	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
198	197	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
199	198	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
200	199	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
DISTRIBUTORS					
201	200	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
202	201	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
203	202	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
204	203	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
205	204	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
206	205	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
207	206	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
208	207	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
209	208	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
210	209	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
ENGINEERING, VEHICLES					
211	210	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
212	211	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
213	212	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
214	213	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
215	214	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
216	215	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
217	216	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
218	217	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
219	218	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
220	219	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
INSURANCE					
221	220	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
222	221	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
223	222	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
224	223	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
225	224	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
226	225	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
227	226	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
228	227	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
229	228	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
230	229	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
INVESTMENT TRUSTS					
231	230	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
232	231	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
233	232	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
234	233	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
235	234	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
236	235	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
237	236	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
238	237	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
239	238	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
240	239	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
SHORTS (under 5 years)					
241	240	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
242	241	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
243	242	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
244	243	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
245	244	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
246	245	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
247	246	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
248	247	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
249	248	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
250	249	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)					
251	250	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
252	251	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
253	252	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
254	253	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
255	254	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
256	255	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
257	256	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
258	257	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
259	258	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
260	259	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
FOOD MANUFACTURERS					
261	260	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
262	261	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
263	262	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
264	263	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
265	264	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
266	265	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
267	266	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
268	267	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
269	268	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
270	269	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
LEISURE & HOTELS					
271	270	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
272	271	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
273	272	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
274	273	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
275	274	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
276	275	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
277	276	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
278	277	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
279	278	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
280	279	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
MINING					
281	280	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
282	281	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
283	282	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
284	283	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
285	284	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
286	285	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
287	286	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
288	287	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
289	288	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117
290	289	Anglo American	120	-2	11.117

HEALTHCARE					
1998	Low	Company	Price	%	PE
130	129	30. Anadarko Petroleum	120	-1	11.117
131	130	31. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
132	131	32. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
133	132	33. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
134	133	34. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
135	134	35. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
136	135	36. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
137	136	37. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
138	137	38. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
139	138	39. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
140	139	40. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
141	140	41. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
142	141	42. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
143	142	43. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
144	143	44. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
145	144	45. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
146	145	46. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
147	146	47. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
148	147	48. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
149	148	49. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
150	149	50. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
151	150	51. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
152	151	52. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
153	152	53. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
154	153	54. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
155	154	55. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
156	155	56. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
157	156	57. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
158	157	58. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
159	158	59. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
160	159	60. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
161	160	61. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
162	161	62. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
163	162	63. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
164	163	64. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
165	164	65. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
166	165	66. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
167	166	67. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
168	167	68. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
169	168	69. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
170	169	70. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
171	170	71. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
172	171	72. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
173	172	73. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
174	173	74. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
175	174	75. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
176	175	76. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
177	176	77. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
178	177	78. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
179	178	79. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
180	179	80. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
181	180	81. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
182	181	82. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
183	182	83. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
184	183	84. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
185	184	85. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
186	185	86. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
187	186	87. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
188	187	88. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
189	188	89. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
190	189	90. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
191	190	91. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
192	191	92. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
193	192	93. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
194	193	94. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
195	194	95. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
196	195	96. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
197	196	97. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
198	197	98. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
199	198	99. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117
200	199	100. Amgen Inc	120	-1	11.117

UNIT TRUST PRICES 31

**Yet another charity
trying to get
as much as it can
out of people.**

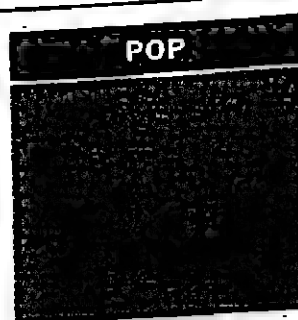
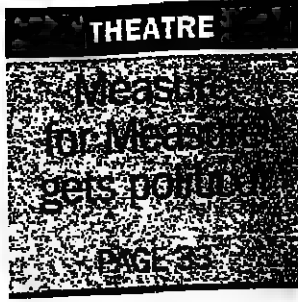
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THE TIMES

ARTS



'Tootsie' Dustin forgets his dress sense

Hollywood is never short of people tossing bizarre writs at each other. You have heard of vanity publishing? Well, this is vanity suing. But even hardened observers of Tinseltown trauma are awestruck by the latest wacky courtroom tiff. A Los Angeles judge is at present pondering whether Dustin Hoffman, a movie star of the most dogged Method-Acting persuasion, should be awarded \$5 million in damages because *Los Angeles* magazine depicted him in a woman's dress without seeking his permission.

Students of motion-picture history will realise that there are complex cultural references involved here. In his 1982 hit *Tootsie*, Hoffman did indeed dress up as a woman — and very ravishing he looked, too. So why is the magazine being sued? Apparently because it showed Hoffman in the *wrong sort of dress*. Using computer technology it doctored the *Tootsie* poster, removing a rather M&S-style red gown from Hoffman's little body and replacing it with a fetching off-the-shoulder number. The altered

picture was then put on the fashion pages with the caption "Dustin Hoffman isn't a drag in a butter-colored silk gown by Richard Tyler and Ralph Lauren heels."

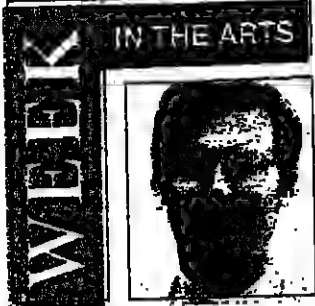
Had such an unauthorised vision of loveliness appeared in an advertisement, Hoffman's case for compensation would be much stronger: his image would clearly have been exploited for commercial gain. But Hoffman cannily claims that a magazine's fashion spread is virtually an advertisement for the clothes portrayed.

Nonsense, the magazine retorts. Fashion pages are editorial, and therefore protected by the First Amendment. I leave historians to ponder whether Benjamin Franklin and company intended the noble prose of the American Constitution to be applied to the case of a cross-dressing actor depicted in a frock that is not his own. It's not impossible, I suppose.

Anyway, Hoffman — who seems to live in an irony-free zone — says that his "right of publicity" has been violated. On the other hand, *Los Angeles* magazine's position is also not without ironies. After all, it is owned by Disney, one of the world's most litigious organisations when protecting its own sacred Mickey Mouse trademark.

Of course there are bigger issues involved here than Hoffman's bust size. The phrase "the camera never lies" has always been one of the world's great lies. People have been tampering with photographs since snapping began. Either it has been done whimsically, as in that celebrated 1917 "proof" of fairies at the bottom of someone's garden; or for more sinister reasons, as when banished ministers disappeared retrospectively from official photographs in Stalin's Russia.

But computers have made photograph manipulation much more so-



RICHARD MORRISON

phisticated. For instance, I could approach some mischievous operative in *The Times* graphics department with two perfectly sober photographs of, say, Miss Melinda Messenger and the Archbishop of Canterbury — and within minutes we could fiddle the originals so that these two pillars of British soci-

ety appeared to be caught in the most thrilling conjunction.

Nor is this dangerous technological alchemy confined to still images. So many television advertisements now tamper with old films in the cause of flogging new cars (think of Dennis Hopper appearing to motor past his younger self in *Easy Rider*) that the trick has become a cliché. Now there is talk of creating "new" Marlene Dietrich and Greta Garbo movies. The computer will digitally store the screen legends' characteristic body movements and vocal traits, then feed them as required into new scenes and dialogue.

A macabre idea? Perhaps, but I bet the interest will be enormous. After all, tomorrow a vast crowd will gather at Wembley Arena for *Elvis Presley — The Concert*, in which the voice and screen image of the pelvisically mobile one will be meshed electronically with live

backing from his former associates. This marks the first time that an entertainer who is no longer living has headlined a concert, the promoters say. Oh really? Have they never seen the Royal Variety Performance?

You don't have to be Mystic Morrison to foresee image manipulation becoming one of the big legal battlegrounds. More and more celebrities will be going to court, *à la* Dustin, to protect their "right of publicity". M'learned friends will have a ball. And what about the rights of the dead? Who is to say that Garbo would have approved of her computerised image eerily presiding over some sultry new drama? Surely at this late stage in her career she really might want to be alone.

The easy answer is "her heirs and estate will protect her". But one's dearly beloved relatives are

not necessarily the most scrupulous guardians of one's posthumous reputation, especially if they can smell money in the air. Has Jacqueline du Pré been well served by her sister? I merely ask.

The fact is that computerised image manipulation, like genetic engineering, has leapt out at us before we have had time to devise a relevant code of ethics. But the genie can't be stuffed back into the bottle now. People in public life probably have to accept that if they want to breathe the heady oxygen of publicity they must renounce control of their image for ever. There's no point in suddenly shouting at the media, in the immortal words of the Princess Royal, "Why don't you just naff off?" They won't.

So all in all, I think Dustin has been a bit daft. Mind you, if *Los Angeles* magazine ever depicts me in a Richard Tyler silk gown, I shall certainly sue. For one thing, the Editor has exclusive serialisation rights to the bodies of all *Times* journalists. For another, I never wear anything except Armani. And a string vest in winter, of course.

DEE CONWAY

Guns and girls were all Greek to us

As someone sings in *The Mikado*, "and I am right, and you are right, and everything is quite correct," which just about sums up Paul Barker's new children's opera, given just two performances on Wednesday and Thursday by Lantano and the New London Children's Choir. The general message is that war is simply frightful and killing people awfully wrong, something that those who go to opera in Western Europe have more or less hoisted in, but maybe Lantano is planning an extensive tour of the Balkans, followed by a run at the Pentagon.

The piece is also written for girls only, 26 of them, but after that the correctness starts to



wear a bit thin. *Stone Angels* lasts for about 40 minutes, and there is a long synopsis in the programme, a wise precaution since without it even the most warm-hearted audience would be hard put to know what on earth was going on.

Roughly speaking, survivors of an air crash on an island off Greece encounter two groups of girls: Stoners (proper little Ladies of the Files, nasty) and Glooks (peaceable, nice). War is raging overhead.

After assorted ill-organised mayhem — the dramaturgy is simply chaotic — one of the girls refuses to flee the Stoners, half of whom are so surprised that they lay down their stones and join her before everyone shame-facedly shuffles off stage — the direction, such as there is, is chaotic as well. Empty stage, long postlude, end of opera. In one very peculiar episode, aircraft manned by the girls' parents (I think I'm right) drop pornographic magazines on the island, and it was here that the absence of any boys seemed especially regrettable.

Barker is an experienced opera composer and cannot be accused of writing down to his performers: tricky intervals

and rhythms, vocal lines hard to pitch. Fine, but the children — all of whom deserve highest praise — had to concentrate so hard on their music that words took second place and were often inaudible, and passages in Greek were no help. There was a great deal of speech and melodrama, and neat differentiation of musical language for the two groups. Odaline de la Martinez conducted the five-strong Lantano chamber group efficiently.

The main point of interest in the evening was how it all came to pass. The absence of anyone to pull it into some sort of coherent dramatic shape proved fatal.

RODNEY MILNES

St Trinian's revisited: members of the excellent New London Children's Choir struggle through the chaotic *Stone Angels*

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CHANGING TIMES

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Magic circle

CONCERTS

Goehr's is the pitiful, if less than elegant, title of an enterprising series of concerts taking place in Cambridge over the next couple of months. The occasion is the retirement of Alexander Goehr, who has been Professor of Music at Cambridge University since 1976, but the opportunity has been taken to celebrate and promote the work of the many composers who have come within Goehr's orbit over the past quarter-century. Robin Holloway and Hugh Wood, along with Goehr himself, have been at the centre of this circle, but younger generations too (George Benjamin, Julian Anderson, Thomas Adès and many others) have come to prominence and all are represented in Goehr's.

For the opening concert on Wednesday night in the West Road Concert Hall, the University's Quartet in Residence, the Endellion String Quartet, gave a neatly balanced programme of Haydn, Schumann and Goehr (the latter's String Quartet No 3, dating

from 1975-76). If the first movement of the Goehr was modelled to some extent, by the composer's own admission, on Beethoven (specifically the E Minor Piano Sonata Op 90), then the second movement recalls Haydn in its quizzically conversational phrase endings. The third movement is altogether more opaque, however, more densely argued, and the Endellion steered an adroit course through these difficult waters.

In Haydn's Quartet in D Major Op 71 No 2 the ensemble's close rapport enabled it to explore a range of moods over the course of the four movements. Well-sprung rhythms gave a buoyant feel to the faster passages, while the Adagio cantabile was as songful as its title implies.

Schumann's debt to Beethoven, in his A Minor Quartet Op 41 No 1, is rather more explicit than Goehr's. In the Adagio, the long-breathed main theme inevitably recalls the slow movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The Endellion succeeded in sustaining these arching lines throughout, and offered a smoothly contoured, rather than sharply defined discourse in the first movement. Despite Schumann's dedication of the quartet to Mendelssohn, they perhaps rightly treated the Scherzo not as one of that composer's elfin creations but as a surdier, more passionate utterance.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Going solo

We've seen the conductor, the soprano wife and now we've heard the instrumentalist. Or some of us have. The prospect of witnessing Sakari Oramo's first appearance as a violinist in Symphony Hall, directing the strings of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in Bach's Concerto in E major while coping with the solo part, proved to be a less than irresistible attraction. Bearing in mind the rest of the programme, which included also Jean-Féry Rebel's *Les Éléments* and Brahms's Second Symphony, it is not very surprising.

Obviously, those who stayed away are not to be credited with any kind of prescience but the fact is, it was not a particularly persuasive performance of the Bach. It was intelligently phrased and coloured and, though not exactly authentic, it was more than acceptably stylish. The violin line seemed thin in these acoustic conditions, however, and there was not much improvement in this respect even when the soloist-director's nerves settled down and what had been

an overbright sound relaxed into something less edgy.

After the Bach, it made good musical sense, if not good box office, to go on to another, more roguish work of a quite different kind. The beginning of *Les Éléments*, which opens with a prelude called *Chaos* and with dissonant harmonies based on a chord of the 13th, is quite astonishing. The pre-Strauss use of two piccolos to represent birdsong and the pre-Wagner fire music are less sensational but no less interesting. It was difficult, on the other hand, to believe in the legitimacy of the cellist-like yelps from members of the orchestra in the *Tambourin*. Until a smart musicologist demonstrates the authenticity of these interventions scepticism is not out of order.

As the most Baroque-minded of the great composers of the 19th century, Brahms was well placed in the second half of the concert. It was reassuring to hear the Second Symphony so well done in the traditionally mellow, lyrical manner with nothing too urgent or querulous about it, with a splendidly sonorous orchestral presence, a sensitively shaped instrumental solo and a powerfully cumulative structural purpose. If, the brass-laden ending seemed more maudlin than triumphant, more in the manner of Tchaikovsky than Brahms, that was the one miscalculation in an otherwise idiomatically and perceptively characterised interpretation.

GERALD LARNER

Still under a cloud

Robert Holman's play *Bad Weather* has not improved on the journey from Stratford to the Barbican. Set on a rough Middlesbrough housing estate, all brooding windows, families and lives, it purports to question whether environment, upbringing or innate character breeds bad behaviour. Every so often, a thoughtful and subtle line raises its head, only to sink under the weight of an under-articulated script.

Teenage troublemaker Jamie is on trial for a crime committed by his friend Luke, whose 17-year-old sister Rhona is carrying Jamie's child. Rhona tries to convince Luke to confess; Jamie's mother Kay is not so sure, since she turns out to care more for Luke than her son. Noel, a juror who believes in Jamie's innocence, pitches

in by starting an adulterous affair with Kay, and he and Rhona summon Kay's old French nanny to sort things out.

French nannies? Council estates? Implausibly, Kay is the heir to a viticultural fortune frittered away by a spendthrift mother. This allows everyone (except poor Jamie, who has been put away for four years) to up sticks and go picnicking in the Loire, where the sadistically severe nanny succumbs to the adolescent attractions of Luke, and like Kay refuses to trade him in for Jamie's freedom. Silly enough anyway, but unfortunately, Paul Popplewell's callow, charmless Luke makes a wholly unconvincing sex-god, which torpedoes any last shred of credibility.

Too often the dialogue is artificial, and though a constant, if studied, intensity holds the attention, Steven Pimlott's static direction fails to liven things up. But there are incidental pleasures. The promising Emma Handy yaks away engagingly as spiky motormouth Rhona, and Ryan Pope's forceful Jamie manages to balance whining self-pity with residual pride. Susan Brown as Kay is bravely moaning, despite the fact she does much with her idiosyncratic part. The unobtrusive but all-gratified metal shutters and concrete slabs — a bit like the Barbican — gives good service.

"It's all degrees, a bit of knowledge here, a bit of understanding there. It's all a mess," says Luke towards the end. To be charitable, maybe Holman intended to suggest that understanding motivations, ascribing guilt, is an impossible task. If so, it does not make for gripping drama. A brave play, but ultimately unrewarding.

NIGEL CLIFF



Caught in the Bard's Viennese whiff, Robert Glenister plays the Duke as a man propelled into a nervous breakdown, while Clare Holman is an Isabella pushed on to the sidelines

Beauty and a universal beast

Most actors playing the Duke begin *Measure for Measure* in fine, princely style. They calmly hand over the running of Vienna to the putzmeister Angelo and sedately leave for their sabbatical. Not in Michael Boyd's production. Robert Glenister slumps grey-faced in a chair with a gin bottle while extracts from Revelation play on the wooden wall behind him, and then, hearing his aides heading down the door, tatters down a walkway into the stalls. Angelo, Escalus et al are left to hear his instructions relayed to them via the sort of creaky gramophone you might have found in Schneider's Vienna, circa 1900.

It is awkward, it makes no sense of Escalus's later claim that the Duke is "a

gentleman of all temperance"; yet I cannot regret it. One reason why *Measure for Measure* is classified as a problem play is that the Duke's motives in disguising himself as a friar and spying on Angelo are hard to explain in any normal way: so hard that scholars have been impelled to see him as symbolising God, Christ, James I, Heaven, knows whom. Glenister's Duke has, you feel, been propelled into a nervous breakdown by the confusions and contradictions, expectations and disappointments of exercising power in messy Vienna. How will a quite different kind of man — the cool, tough, staid Angelo — deal with the pressure?

This company does the play a more overtly political tilt than most, and, though I blinked at the moment

THEATRE

when the returning Duke's irregularly disarmed Angelo's well-drilled officers and ensured that there would be no coup in dear old Vienna, I cannot regret that either.

Stephen Boyd gives a quietly terrifying performance as the corrupt, in-corrupible himself. At first he wears the sort of Russian peasant costume that Bolshevik intellectuals affected in the early days, later a grey uniform that, were you to add a swastika or skull emblem, would suggest the SS. And all along he justifies what might

be sartorial trickiness with the quality of his acting.

Boyd's Angelo is aggressive, cynical, arrogantly self-confident, contemptuous of lesser mortals and, in his frosty, dispassionate way, very fond indeed of power. We have heard this man's dehumanising rhetoric in our own era: the all-too-credible vow to sacrifice his brother or son to some abstract "justice"; the frightening declaration that he shows most pity when he is harshest; "for then I pity those I do not know". He will no doubt be primarily spreading misery in the next century too, for he is a universal monster.

Boyd's approach, bold and even brilliant though it is, rewards some areas of the play more than others. The object of Angelo's predatory lust, Isabella, is somewhat sidelined, feel-

ingly played though she is by Clare Holman. But the brothel and jail scenes are pretty strong. When whores are lazily whipping transvestite men, or the pimp Pompey is playing comically sadistic games with his fellow prisoners, you can see why Boyd's punitive Angelo has political appeal.

You can also see why Glenister's human, tolerant Duke has despaired. His rendering of the great speech about the virtues of death comes across, not as a prolonged extract from the *Dictionary of Quotations*, but as a personal expression of ontological derision. After all, in a world as ungovernable as this, how does a good prince cope?

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Talking body language

Clothes? They're so, like, yesterday. Even royalty now knows that what really talks is the body and what you do to it: pierce it, tattoo it, cut it, expose it. Mass communication has destroyed the tribalism of costume: every kid from Tashkent to Tokyo sports identikit combat pants and funky Nikes; the Mods must be turning in their parkas.

Performed, for the most part, in the nude, Gilles Jobin's *A+B-X* creates a new abstract of the human body. The three performers pull themselves through dim pools of greenish light in a series of extraordinary contortions: now headless, now dismembered, now popping with strings of tensed muscle; the low unnatural colour picking out their contours like an alien landscape.

Positions more often seen in the pages of *Readers' Wives* are rendered sexless, played out against a harsh industrial soundtrack. Such conceptualism is cut through with a knowing humour: after spending a quarter of an hour with their naked bottoms held aloft, the trio retreat with a comic wiggle of their rears, in a kind of "arty crowd you may be, but we know what you're looking at" fashion.

In a way the dehumanisation of *A+B-X* is easier to accept because of the perfection on display: not simply of the bodies themselves, but of the sustained control of the extruding sequences they put themselves through. The clean lines of the movement pieces are framed by film footage of the arch self-mutilator Franco B in all his ghoulish glory.

Predictably, the moment the cast don clothing, they appear more exposed than before, and the sight of Jobin moaning is surprisingly grim. The final performed image of a woman standing naked with her face covered, glowing white in the glare of four spotlights, is still shockingly vulnerable, despite all that has gone before: the naked body is after all, always more than the sum of its parts.

HETTIE JUDAH

Positively uninhibited

In his new play Brad Fraser continues to make his characters jump through the hoops of love, sex and honesty. Is it possible, so his cartoonist hero Matt is presumably asking, to manage all three at the same time? Matt is gay, in a fitfully tolerant Toronto, and the immensely successful

creator of *Spun Boy*, and *Fridge Magnet Girl*, whose adventures we see him developing with his working partner, Rachel. Played at the Royal Exchange by Ben Daniels, he is handsome, effervescent and projects the character's fierce intelligence, but he has now turned 30: none of his relation-

ships has lasted beyond three months, not even an early marriage (shown in Fraser's previous play, *Poor Super Man*).

If the fault lies not in himself, might it be a consequence of being gay, in a world predominantly straight, or living at the time of *Aids*? Airing these concerns, he embarks on an affair with Ian Gelder's politician, whose guilt-fuelled domestic arrangements suggest successful hoop-jumping is nothing but desperate fantasy. This is an uninhibited play about inhibitions. Matt's wit and honesty make him a thor-

oughly positive character, and Daniels and Ruth Lass create a convincing office relationship.

Doubts about the play surface in those areas where Fraser explores the serious follies of his politician, Martin. Here is a man who was a virgin till 25, and is now so keen to act as substitute dad to homeless waifs that he supports the soft drug habit of one and the fecklessness of another. Almost every scene where Gelder appears with young Rex (a flushed Daniel Roberts) or with the ruffier Yves (Nathan Willcocks) ends with him digging into his pocket for more dollars.

Matt's openness is so placed as to contrast with Martin's complicated burden of anger, longing and grievous mistakes. The rage that can be felt by the Positive (as distinct from the simply positive) for those who are uninitiated steals in upon us during the play's later scenes, and Matt's own dangerous "mistake" follows logically. But while the air of withholding plans and feelings suits the character as given, the sources of his compulsions remain out of reach.

Marianne Elliott's direction seems to be acknowledging this by closing with the five characters as far apart as possible on this open stage. At other times the openness works against audibility in a play of fast Canadian talk and cultural predilects. But if the play's centre retreats from us the outer reaches do capture the quality of discontented lifestyles that is Fraser's particular skill.

JEREMY KINGSTON

"Intelligent, funny, moving... Beatty's finest work to date... a return to real film-making, cinema of quality and substance."

Phil Jupitus - URGUT

"Truly a terrific film."

NEON

"Warren Beatty back on blistering form."

RME

"Lovely, savage stuff..."

Barry Norman - THE RADIO TIMES

"Extraordinary."

TIME OUT

3 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS

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BEST ACTOR (Shared or Shared - Warren Beatty)
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HALLE BERRY

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HILARY and JACKIE

Starts Today In The West End
And February 12 Nationwide

LISTINGS

Ostrovsky at the National

ARTS

POP OPINION
Trouble at Top of the Pops

RECOMMENDED THIS WEEKEND

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Merril Hargre

LONDON

THE FOREST: Alan Ayckbourn's mordant 1970 comedy, with Michael Feast's impassioned actor trying to impress his rich aunt (Frances de la Tour). Anthony Page directs. Lyttelton (0171-452 5000). Preview from tonight, 7.30pm.

THE COUNTRY WIFE: Martin Parr plays the randy Homer pursuing Victoria Pembroke in the title role. A Present Moment production of Wyndham's last comedy. Bridewell (0171-986 3456). Opens tonight, 7.30pm.

ANNIVERSARY CONCERT: The London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble return to the venue of their first concert to celebrate 50 years of profile making. A festive programme includes 10th-century liturgical songs by Strauss framed by works by Darius and Schubert. Wigmore Hall (0171-935 2141). Sunday, 4pm.

GOETHE NIGHT: Marking the 250th anniversary of the birth of the great German writer, the National Theatre presents an evening of music and song with a specially written drama. St John's, Smith Square (0171-222 1001). Tonight, 7.30pm.

ELSEWHERE

BIRMINGHAM: The award-winning Birmingham Festival Orchestra under its charismatic conductor/producer Ian Fisher makes its first visit here with an all-Mozart programme. With the noted pianist Alicia Lohman as soloist in the Piano Concerto K453. Symphony Hall (0121-212 3333). Tomorrow, 4pm.



Josephine Barstow sings Richard Strauss in Leeds

LEEDS: Opera North presents a gala concert dedicated to the music of Richard Strauss. Steven Sloane conducts the English Northern Philharmonia in a concert celebrating the centenary of Strauss's birth. The concert features the English Northern Philharmonia's first performance of Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. The concert is part of the English Northern Philharmonia's 50th anniversary celebrations. The concert is part of the English Northern Philharmonia's 50th anniversary celebrations. The concert is part of the English Northern Philharmonia's 50th anniversary celebrations.

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London

House full, returns only. Some seats available. Seats at all prices.

CRUEL CANDLES: Denis Quilley plays various European celebrities who fall for the charms of young Marie (Barbara) (Celia Williams) in the 18th century. The play is a comedy of manners. The play is a comedy of manners. The play is a comedy of manners.

THE DECEIVED: The Italian source for Shakespeare's Twelfth Night but much more of a cross-dressing comedy. Kenneth Ross's production for the National Theatre. The play is a comedy of manners. The play is a comedy of manners.

LITTLE MALCOLM AND HIS STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BURNING: Ewan McGregor in the title role of a satirical comedy about a young man who is a victim of a fire. The play is a comedy of manners. The play is a comedy of manners.

THE STREET OF CROOKED LIVES: A comedy of manners. The play is a comedy of manners. The play is a comedy of manners.

THE GLORY OF LIVING: British drama. The play is a comedy of manners. The play is a comedy of manners.

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES: **HAIRY AND JACKIE (15):** A comedy about a young man who is a victim of a fire. The play is a comedy of manners. The play is a comedy of manners.

PRACTICAL MAGIC (12): Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman star in a comedy about a young man who is a victim of a fire. The play is a comedy of manners. The play is a comedy of manners.

THE OPPOSITE OF SEX (18): A comedy about a young man who is a victim of a fire. The play is a comedy of manners. The play is a comedy of manners.

CLASSY (15): A comedy about a young man who is a victim of a fire. The play is a comedy of manners. The play is a comedy of manners.

What have they done to my songs?

Like all beloved institutions, *Top of the Pops* should be cherished. Actually, just leaving it alone would help

It's as broken as a dropped clock. It is dull yet grossly insulting. I could be wrong, but I catch the whiff of focus group from its carcass: programmes don't become as bland and annoying as *Top of the Pops* is without some puffed-up piggy bank from management gathering C2s in a Novotel outside Putney and asking them what they think about Fatboy Slim and 911. There have been multiple-choice questionnaires involved. Boxes have been ticked. People have been asked: "What would you like *Top of the Pops* to be like in the future?"

What a stupid question. We aren't psychic. We don't know what the future of TV holds. We can only refer to the past. The answer to "What would you like *Top of the Pops* to be like?" is "I'd like it to have Queen and the Beatles on every week, please, and be presented by a magical mythical beast with the body of Marilyn Monroe and the soul of Elvis."

Failing the existence of this creature, however, the producer of *Top of the Pops* has courted in Kate Thornton. I can't stand her. Too ordinary to be a low-rent Melinda Messenger, but not sparky enough to be pop's Anthea Turner. Thornton is the living, breathing embodiment of that horrible belief that Being Pushy is a Virtue in itself. As the editor of *Smash Hits* she presided over a circulation slip while Britain underwent a



CAITLIN MORAN

also seems to be struggling with her presenting chores: she twists her face through the Gurn Olympics in order to appear intelligent. Sexy and Tough at the same time, and still ends up looking like a drunken George Lash shouting "Kick him! Kick him!" in a nightclub car park.

Presenters are never the biggest problem, though. *Top of the Pops* has weathered Jimi Savile, DLT and the un-earthly leer of Simon Mayo, and still managed to turn up the epoch every week. No, its current malaise has arisen because whoever holds its soul in his palm does not seem to realise it is not just another chart show. *Top of the Pops* is pure myth, pure magic. It is holy. Shirley Manson from Garbage explained it best: "If you get on *Top of the Pops* then nothing really bad ever happens to you again, and you won't ever die."

The show's previous producer, Rik Blaxhull, understood this: he knew it was a freak parade, a dream academy, a place from which otherwise unemployable visionaries broadcast into suburban homes and blow kids' minds. He knew his music, so he could pick bands from the weeks' 40 knowing who would shine and rock. He had the added vision of Julian Cope presenting the show in a witch's hat and tiny shorts. Blaxhull also gave presenting employment to Bear with Beers, a joyful pneumatic Dutch brunet who dressed in S&M leathers and sent herself up while exuding utter, delirious, dog-like delight at the idea of being on TV. Blaxhull teased the best out of *TOTP*'s tried and trusted format.

However, the new producer Chris Cowey has tried to change the programme in a touchy-feely, focus-group kind of way. His first innovation,

presumably in order to comfort older viewers, is the dull, context-less inclusion of a track from the No 1 album. What's wrong with that? Well, No 1 albums almost invariably have a single in the *Top Ten* anyway; that's why the album's at No 1 in the first place. And secondly, *Top of the Pops* is a programme about the singles chart. It's a fairly simple concept, and one which takes unkindly to a surreal look at an entirely different chart. You might as well include a quick shout at the Nationwide League.

The other revamp feature is the sporadic glances "backstage", supposed to reveal what a glittery, party party *TOTP* is. I suspect that a blind hermit could have told the producers what backstage at *TOTP* is really like: famous people locked in dressing rooms with their entourage. I mean, the *TOTP* studios are in a big building made of concrete where the tea is orange. And you have to hang around all day not drinking! It is absurdly not Studio 54 being gate-crashed by Dionysus and some naked, spiral-eyed mates he met in the pub.

But it's not all doom and gloom. The programme may now be utter budge, but I think the "controversial" new Friday night slot works very well. I frequently forget to watch it.

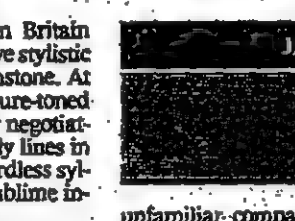
Kate Thornton's style as *Top of the Pops* presenter does not go down well chez Moran

Propping up the isobars

No other jazz singer in Britain has such an impressive stylistic range as Norma Winstone. At one extreme, her voice is a pure-toned musical instrument, delicately negotiating the most intricate of melody lines in a perfectly matched flow of wordless syllables. At the other, she is a sublime interpreter of lyrics.

Right now, she is at the peak of her form in both genres. A few days before Christmas I heard her pacing Kenny Wheeler's oblique trumpet note for note in an evening of his big band compositions at London's Vortex Club, her translucent upper register adding an ethereal timbre to the ensemble. Meanwhile her current CD of duets with pianist John Taylor, *Like Song, Like Weather*, demonstrates her ability to mould the lyrics of a song into a dramatic miniature.

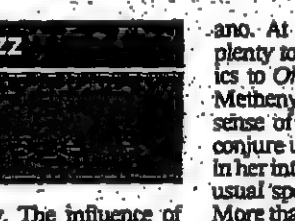
Her current tour with pianist John Taylor's trio offers plenty of opportunities to hear both sides of her work, plus the added bonus of hearing her in



JAZZ

unfamiliar company. The influence of her long-term associates John Taylor and Kenny Wheeler is still obvious, overtly in the form of arrangements, and more subtly in Winstone's phrasing, but Donaldson is his own man, and shares Winstone's stylistic breadth. His playing alternates between a brash confidence and delicate support, but he retains an air of living dangerously, especially in Billie Holiday's *If the Moon Turns Green* and his own *Seighe*.

Winstone's wordless style was at its best on John McLaughlin's *Little Miss Valley*, her voice catching the nuances of guitar riffs and falling neatly into some complex unison passages with the pi-



JAZZ

ano. At the other extreme, she found plenty to work on in Sue Shattock's lyrics to *Oh My Darling*, a reworked Pat Metheny song that created a fleeting sense of holiday mood. This ability to conjure up the essence of place and time in her interpretations has brought an unusual specialism into Winstone's work. More than any other singer, she concentrates on singing about the weather, and brought a convincing dampness into the title song of her recent album *Manhattan in the Rain*.

Both sides of her work came together in a couple of songs by Antonio Carlos Jobim. The cranky, amateur lyrics of *Two Kites* were matched by her scintillating performance, with surprise flourishes into the very highest register. With Andy Cleyndert's relaxed bass and Tristram Mollitor's drums in support, there is no jazz singer in the country to match her.

ALYN SHIPTON

OPERA & BALLET

COLLEGE (0171 452 5000): *THE WALKER* (1970) by John L. Thompson. Tuesday 7.30. The Walker. Tickets: £10, £15, £20, £25, £30, £35, £40, £45, £50, £55, £60, £65, £70, £75, £80, £85, £90, £95, £100.

DANCE

SARLES WELLS Theatre (0171 452 5000): *SANKAI JUKU* (1998) by Sankai Juku. Tuesday 7.30. Tickets: £10, £15, £20, £25, £30, £35, £40, £45, £50, £55, £60, £65, £70, £75, £80, £85, £90, £95, £100.

THEATRES

ADOLPH (0171 452 5000): *ADOLPH* (1998) by Adolph. Tuesday 7.30. Tickets: £10, £15, £20, £25, £30, £35, £40, £45, £50, £55, £60, £65, £70, £75, £80, £85, £90, £95, £100.

THEATRES

ALPHONSE (0171 452 5000): *ALPHONSE* (1998) by Alphonse. Tuesday 7.30. Tickets: £10, £15, £20, £25, £30, £35, £40, £45, £50, £55, £60, £65, £70, £75, £80, £85, £90, £95, £100.

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POP ALBUMS

Snowpony impress

ARTS

TOMORROW

Critic's choice in Metro

Happy birthday suit to youth

Crazy name, crazy guys: Canada's Barenaked Ladies have put humour in the charts. Paul Sexton reports

Success in showbusiness has many occupational hazards, but they do not usually include being assaulted with packaged food. Such, though, is the lot of Barenaked Ladies, the Canadian band who put a decade of hard labour into their new-found North American stardom — their album, *Stunt*, has gone triple platinum in America — and who will be back on an English stage next week, dodging boxes of macaroni cheese.

To describe a Ladies concert as lively is like calling Bart Simpson playful, and one of the joys of their belated breakthrough — is that it proves that a sense of humour and creative excellence need not be oil and water in the rock world. As they proved on previous UK visits in less celebrated times, the Barenaked boys will charm total strangers with shows of manic, Goomish jollity and damn good tunes. Plus that unusual concert tradition where the Beatles got jelly beans and Jim Jones gets knickers, this five-piece has tons of apple sauce and boxes of macaroni cheese lobbed at it.

"We're trying to curb that a little bit," says co-writer and singer Ed Robertson. "Have they gone all serious and, then? No, stresses bassist Jim Creeggan, they would, just rather not have to play in hard hats. 'Maybe one idiot in the audience would put a little more steam behind the throw and hit somebody. You get hit by food, it sucks.' Robertson adds, philosophically: "But you know that going into a show, you're at Madison Square Garden in New York, Barenaked Ladies performed at an all-star concert staged by the city's top-rated pop radio station, 2100. Lesser men would have been daunted by an audience of screaming, dreamy 16-year-olds awaiting the appearance of pin-ups such as N Sync and 98 Degrees, but the band made

them all rock and roar, especially with a gloriously absurd closing medley that stapled together songs like *Gettin' Jiggy Wit It*, *My Heart Will Go On* and *Bittersweet Symphony*. But, much as one smiles at their compositions such as *Be My Yoko Ono* and *If I Had \$1,000,000*, it would be misleading to file the Ladies in the novelty section. As they underline again on *Stunt* with songs such as *Alcohol* and *When You Dream*, they can do shade as well as light. "Our live shows are off the wall and fun," says Robertson, "but especially with the new record, people get a lot clearer picture of what the band's about musically. There's still fun on the record, but it's not as overt as it's been in the past."

"I don't care when people use the word 'zany' about us because sometimes we are ridiculous, but when it's used to detract from what the band does musically, then I have a problem with it, because for me those are two very separate things. People say 'You should do stand-up, and we always say no. It's just that you don't expect to see a band that makes you laugh, but if you came along expecting a comedy night, you'd be very disappointed.'"

"I like to think our music is like an honest conversation. If you're sitting with a friend over the course of an evening, you don't just make jokes all night and you don't talk serious all night."

Robertson's co-writer and singer, Steven Page, recalling some "comic" "obscure" — on those earlier UK gigs, senses a cultural kinship between Brits and Canadians. "There's a certain faction of Canadians that clings to dear life to England," he says. "It's kind of the place that keeps us not being American. If we didn't have a fish and chip shop on the corner, or we weren't rushing home to see *Coronation*



After a decade of hard slog, Barenaked Ladies have finally cracked it big time in America. The drawback to this, though, is that they get pelted with macaroni cheese more often

Street, we would be American." Their ear for the absurdities of language has had audiences in this country in stitches as they played with newfound English phrases like toddlers in an Early Learning Centre. I remember them once constructing an entire song about Jeffie Gakes. "And Page says they still get requests for it: 'Whatever word happens to strike us, we play with,' says drummer Tyler Stewart. "We talked about baps a lot. I remember. And slapper is one of our favourite words. We met these girls from Liverpool when we were there in 1994. I swear they were the original Spice Girls. They were so funny, drink you under the table, winy Scouse birds. They used this word slapper all the time."

"I think the biggest thing Canadians have in common with British people is that we both get embarrassed," says Page. "Americans just don't get embarrassed." Page recalls the sensation of finding the acclaim for their shows in this country never translated into record sales, least of all in the Britpop era. "A song like *Brian Wilson* wasn't going to get with *Song 2* by Blur," he says. "We felt really on the verge of something in the UK, but each record never quite hit it, and by the time the third record, *Born On A Fire*

Ship, came out, the ball was just dropped. We thought this is terrible, our chance has gone." Their recent success is made more poignant by the current absence of keyboard player Kevin Hearn, now making a good recovery from leukemia. "Now that he's recuperating, it's doubly frustrating for him that he can't be out here on tour with us," says Robertson. "It's a really hard thing when you feel like your career is at its pinnacle, but you're not celebrating it together."

The belated triumph of Barenaked Ladies is a tale of victory against the odds by a band that will not sit comfortably in any of the industry pigeonholes. "I like diversity in music, but it's hard to market," says Robertson. "There's so much music these days, everybody wants to be able to say what they're a cross between, like 'It's somewhere between U2 and Soul Coughing'. We are Herman's Hermits meets Henson's Muppets."

Cutting edge

MICHEL PORTAL

Dockings (Label Bleu LBLC 6604 HM 83)

THE multi-instrumentalist Michel Portal has always scorned genre boundaries, especially those between jazz and avant-garde classical music. A recent duo album with accordion player Richard Galliano, for instance, interspersed pieces by Astor Piazzolla and Hermeto Pascoal with Balkan folk; a 1995 album, *Cinemas*, embraced everything from orchestral tango to Maghrebi rhythms.

Here, with his front-line instruments augmented by Marcus Stockhausen's agile trumpet and propelled by the nervy but fluent piano of Bojan Zulfikarpasic, Portal casts his musical net as widely as ever. There are vigorously scuffling clarinet improvisations over Bruno Chevillon's live bass and Joey Baron's scurrying drums, intricate ensemble pieces redolent of North Africa, and a plangent waltz with Carla Bley's *Ida Lupino*, featuring Steve Swallow on singing electric bass. Another rich, texturally adventurous album from one of Europe's most imaginative musicians.

JAZZ ALBUMS

JOHN CRITCHINSON QUARTET

Excuse Me, Do I Know You? (Jazz House JHCD056)

HE WAS Ronnie Scott's pianist from 1979 until the latter's death in 1996, so John Critchinson's tribute to Scott is thoroughly imbued with respect for the late saxophonist's personal tastes, both musical and extra-musical.

Thus a vigorously interactive quartet, completed by saxophonist Pat Crumly, bassist Leon Clayton and drummer Mark Fletcher, visit some of Scott's playing favourites — *This Heart of Mine*, *Seven Steps to Heaven* — as well as performing originals in his favoured jazz styles, one of which — the title-track — memorialises one of Scott's more famous metaphors.

With vocal appearances from Georgie Farnie and Flora Purim, this album not only focuses the sadness caused by the death of one of jazz's most prominent musicians, but also honours the playing of some of its finest living practitioners.

CHRIS PARKER

Pale horse of a different colour

SNOWPONY
The Slow-Motion World of Snowpony
(Radioactive RARD 1R28 £15.99)

AS ANY half-decent alternative rock band led by a woman might expect these days, Snowpony have been optimistically compared with Garbage and PJ Harvey. Singer and songwriter Katharine Gifford certainly has a dark, 1990s twist to her lyrics: "I used to dream in black and white, but now I dream in red," she sings in the macabre *3 can Keep a Secret* (if 2 are Dead).

But the trio comprising former members of Stereolab, My Bloody Valentine and Moonshake — a sort of super-group of gloom — lacks the full-on approach of Garbage, and Gifford's glacial vocal delivery has little in common with Harvey's voodoo wail. Instead they combine some fairly conventional, chorus-free riffs with startling bursts of almost-discordant horn parts that are inserted into the arrangements of numbers such as *Bad Sister* and *Snow White* like a poker thrust into the embers of a fire.

Neat little shards of feedback stab into the fabric of *Jay Way Down* and a rogue star threads an erratic course through the dancey groove of *Titanic*, while a church bell tolls in the back of the mix. "Why do I get these headaches?" Gifford sings in *St Lucy's Gate*, a woozy psychedelic interlude that sounds like a bad dream set to music. The question may be rhetorical, but rarely has the product of a sore head sounded this smart and imaginative.

NEW POP ALBUMS: It's being doomy and gloomy that makes Snowpony so cheering, says David Sinclair



If a migraine could sing, it would sound like Snowpony. Now there's an enticing prospect

time of year in 1998 and 1997 respectively, the Parisian duo Cassius are about to make a mainstream splash with their cunningly titled debut, 1999.

Philippe Zdar and Hubert "Boombass" Blanc-Francat are, at 31, veterans of the

French dance scene. They have produced three albums for rap star MC Solaar, made their own hip hop records as La Funk Mob and remixed the biggest hits of both Daft Punk (*Around the World*) and Air (*Sexy Boy*). The pair call their

music "urban electro funk", and their trick is to combine house beats with the seditious synopses invented by James Brown, producing an accessible brand of dancefloor funk, adroitly retooled for the rave generation.

They hit their stride midway through this album with *Mister Eveready*, *Nul's* and *Somebody*, a string of ingenious, minimalist grooves that have a simultaneously galvanising and hypnotic effect. An

tiqne synthesizer sounds and feisty vocal chants pick out the melody line of *Club Soixante* *Quinze*, while the radio edit of their current hit single *Cassius 99*, with its Donna Summer sample, recalls the questionable thrill of 1970s disco, a style that has now been rehabilitated in a way that few people who actually lived through that era would previously have believed possible.

FOXY BROWN
Cynda Doll
(Def Jam/Mercury 558 933 £15.99)

OPENING with the (presumably simulated) sound of Foxy Brown being born, *Cynda Doll* is a broadly autobiographical album which spares the listener little in the way of detail. The rapper from Brooklyn is cursing, threatening and demanding respect almost before her feet have hit the ground, the only wrinkle in the plot being that the voice is that of a woman and not a man.

A succession of heavyweight stars, including the likes of Jay-Z, DMX and Memphis Bleek, are on hand to complement her vocal assets at strategic points throughout the album and she achieves a certain rough chemistry with her various partners on tracks such as *Bonnie & Clyde Part II* and *Can You Feel Me Baby*. But in the end it's all much too frightening to be sensual.

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK
The Dance Album
(The Hit Label AHLCDE £15.99)

IF TOM JONES can become the same of middle-aged cool (admittedly a few years ago now) and Cher can reinvent herself as a disco diva, then why not revive and recast Engelbert Humperdinck as the king of the 1990s dance-floor?

Well, there are 11 good reasons why not on *The Dance Album*, a collection of Humperdinck "favourites" including

Release Me, *The Last Waltz* and *A Man Without Love*, together with various standards and one or two new songs, all set to a thumping, end-of-the-pier disco beat with predictably exuberant results.

As well as the three producers, there are another three people credited solely for coming up with the "original concept" for this album. Humperdinck is not the only one who needs to think again.

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THE CARDIGANS
GRAN TURISMO

The Cardigans follow their world-beating album *First Band On The Moon* with *Gran Turismo*. More mature than its predecessor, this album features uplifting and melancholic, thoughtful and energetic pop music. Including the hit *My Favourite Game* and the new single *Erase/Rewind*, *Gran Turismo* grabs you first time and won't let go.

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TOP TEN ALBUMS

- (2) *You're Gonna Love Me* — Baby — Baby
- (1) *Two Rivers* — Expectations — You
- (3) *London & Westminster* — The Best of — George Michael (Epic)
- (4) *Where We Belong* — Boyzone (Polydor)
- (5) *Talk on Corners* — Steps (Epic)
- (6) *Shap Dev* — Madonna (Nonesuch)
- (7) *Ray of Light* — Madonna (Nonesuch)
- (8) *Forgotten, Not Forgotten* — Cori (Atlantic)
- (9) *The Best of 1980-1990* — U2 (Island)
- (10) *The Best of* — M People (M People)

Figure in brackets indicates last week's position

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SOMETHING BEGINNING WITH...



Amanda Platell, left, was fired from *The Express on Sunday* by Rosie Boycott, Editor-in-Chief, right, after sales dipped below one million — and after running a contentious story on Peter Mandelson

No answer to the P45 question

Boycott has fired Platell from the *Express* but will she herself survive?

After the firing of Amanda Platell this week, *The Express on Sunday* has lost its fifth editor in a row, and the question that has to be asked is how much more of a newspaper can it survive? Only years ago was the underdog champion of Middle England, and now it is an anathema to its readership. It is a sad state of affairs for a paper that once was a household name.

Platell fell out with Rosie Boycott, Editor-in-Chief of *The Express on Sunday*, in November when she published a report about a friendship between the former Cabinet Minister Peter Mandelson (a friend and neighbour of Boycott's) and a Brazilian student in the UK in which Mandelson was said to be a homosexual.

Truth of the row is difficult to tell but Platell believed that Boycott had sanctioned the story. Boycott believed that she had been misled. What is not in doubt is that on the day of publication Mandelson delivered a handwritten note to Boycott's home, that Lord of the *Express* proprietor, Lord Thomson, made four calls to the *Express* news-

desk, and that the story was read to Mandelson, after which substantial cuts were made.

Three weeks later Platell read in *The Spectator* that her job had been offered to Sarah Sands, deputy editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, who had turned it down. Platell won a reprieve, partly because Paper Round pointed out that editors-in-chief ought to accept ultimate responsibility for what appears in their papers — but Platell's head has undoubtedly been on the block since then.

When the axe fell this week, it chopped not only Platell but also veteran news editor Ian Walker. Yesterday associate editor Andrew Pierce, one of the authors of the Mandelson story, also walked the plank. He announced his resignation at a conference, saying he was sick of seeing the Sunday paper rubbished and adding that the high morale on the Sunday paper would now plummet to the level on the daily.

Platell is under an oath of silence but her supporters insist that Mandelson had vowed he

would destroy her career. Boycott's associates insist that Mandelson had nothing to do with the decision, as he has stated through his spokesman. The decision that she should go was made before the Mandelson saga, they say.

Boycott is the boss and deep-seatedly believes that she and Platell are different personalities who were bound to clash. Where Boycott is broadsheet, liberal, cerebral (a judge of this year's Whitbread Prize), Platell is a red-top tabloid veteran, an outgoing Aussie whom critics would say was over-promoted and the wrong editor for Boycott's *Express*.

Platell, moreover, was steering the Sunday paper in a different direction from the daily. Boycott has embarked on one of the most daring or foolhardy acts in tabloid history by surrounding her-



self with broadsheet journalists and transforming the once Tory and ultra-traditional *Express* into a New Age, new Labour newspaper for the new millennium. The P45 question is whether she can win enough new, younger readers without alienating the older readership.

Platell, while, ignored the evolution of the daily and — as her staff would put it — made the Sunday paper brighter, breezier and more fun to read. What that meant, as Boycott's deputy Chris Blackhurst told them yesterday, was that there was a "gulf in standards" between the daily and Sunday, his polite way of saying that Platell's paper was politically off-message and too vulgar.

Another nail in Platell's coffin was delivered when sales of *The Express on Sunday* slumped last month to a historic low of

973,000. *Express* conspiracy theorists say Boycott, seeking to worsen Platell's plight, cancelled the TV advertising for the Sunday title that would have kept sales above a million — and add that the *Express* TV ad campaign makes no mention of the Sunday.

Blackhurst and Michael Pilgrim now take the helm. Both worked with Boycott on *The Independent* and will need all the help they can get. *The Express on Sunday* has a staff of only 26 — compared with nearly 200 on *The Mail on Sunday* — and has suffered continual redundancies.

The show at critical moments, such as 11pm last Saturday when the runaway foster parents Jeff and Jenny Bramley returned to Britain. Simon Walters, deputy editor, had to find a cash machine so that two remaining subs, due to finish their shift at midnight and catch the last train, could stay to finish the story and get home by cab. He paid the bill from his own pocket.

Sales this month are down 150,000 on a year ago. Within five years average issue readership has fallen from 4.7 million to 2.7 million. Advertising volume is down four per cent but up nearly four per cent for *The MoS*. Meanwhile *The MoS*, launched only in 1982, is selling nearly 2.3 million, up 130,000 on last year.

Seen from Boycott's chair, the logic of firing Platell is impeccable. The Sunday title will now be on-side and on-message. That, however, makes the pressure on her still greater. Since she took the chair last May, sales of *The Express* have fallen by 88,000. If her high-wire act is to succeed, which many doubt, she needs long-term commitment from Hollick and editorial stability.

The late Sir David English used to say that the instinct that made great editors worked for only one newspaper, that what made him a natural *Mail* Editor would not have worked for *The Sunday Times*. The tragedy for Rosie Boycott may be that a natural Editor of *The Independent on Sunday* (which she was) is not a natural Editor of *The Express*. Can she prove the cynics wrong?

Is Dyke the man to take over from Birt?

The Conservatives are preparing to raise the issue of "cronyism" if, as seems likely, Greg Dyke, the chairman of Pearson Television, emerges as a serious candidate to become the next Director-General of the BBC.

Mr Dyke, a multimillionaire from his days as chief executive of London Weekend Television, is a committed supporter of new Labour and one of a group, many with media connections, who sponsored the office of Tony Blair before the last election.

Peter Ainsworth, the Shadow Minister for Culture, Media and Sport, says that the job of Director-General of the BBC was so important that anyone who held the office should be "seen to be beyond reproach in political terms".

"I would advise the Chairman of the BBC to think very carefully about appointing anyone directly involved in sponsoring Mr Blair's office," says Mr Ainsworth.

The BBC is about to appoint headhunters to find a Director-General to replace Sir John Birt, who plans to leave in April 2000. The aim is to choose a candidate by the summer and to have that person in place by the autumn, to spend some time working in tandem with Sir John. The race is unusually open, with at least five internal and five external candidates.

Mr Dyke is attracting increasing attention because he is by nature an iconoclast with strong programme-making credentials and has a close relationship with Sir Christopher Bland, the BBC Chairman, from their days at LWT.

Dyke has not yet definitely made up his mind to "throw his hat in the ring", but even senior colleagues at Pearson concede privately that they would not stand in his way if the offer were made. The role of Director-General of the BBC is still seen as one of the plum jobs in world broadcasting.

It is unlikely that the Governors of the BBC would automatically rule out Mr Dyke because of his political connections. After all, Sir Christopher is a former Conservative local councillor and former chairman of the Conservative Bow Group. The issue would be whether Mr Dyke would be prepared to renounce his overt political support for new Labour. It is believed that he did not contribute to Labour Party funds while he was a broadcaster at LWT.

Friends say that if Mr Dyke decided to stand for the post, his aim would be to simplify the BBC bureaucracy and to give greater encouragement to programme-makers.

Before joining LWT in 1987, Mr Dyke, who started his career as a local newspaper reporter in West London, was director of programmes at TVS and editor-in-chief at TV-am, the commercial breakfast station. Both TV-am and TVS lost their licences in the 1991 tenders for new ITV franchises.

RAYMOND SNOOPY

The death of L!ve is on the cards

WDEVER wins the battle for *Mirror* Group Newspapers. It is thought unlikely that L!ve TV will survive, or that new *Sporting Life* will go ahead. By shutting down L!ve media experts reckon the group would save between £3 million and £10 million a year, while the most like purchaser, Chris Oakley, a former director of M.C., has always been sceptical about starting up a new national sports paper.

L! TV, that peddler of wac programming, immortalised in the BBC documentary 'ghumars at Canary Wharf', has failed as a local cable television network, but it

Radio, to sit at a studio microphone alongside the breakfast presenter David Banks. Makers of television documentaries ought to be banging down the doors at Talk. For Kelvin is still up to his old tricks. As reported here last week, Carole Stone, a former producer of *Any Questions* on Radio 4, was invited to oversee its new Thursday night debate. But by Friday evening, after receiving a telephone call from Kelvin, she had backed off from further involvement in the project, murmuring the words: "Interesting, instructive."

She had thought that MacKenzie wanted serious discussions about, say, the euro. What he really had in mind was such topics as "why Sean Connery is moving back to Scotland from Spain", and celebrity panelists.

He is displaying a touching faith in his power to turn tabloid journalists into broadcasters: Jane Moore, the *Sun* columnist currently being tried out as a co-presenter with Scott Chisholm, moves next week to a new show, *My Favourite Year*, which consists of an interview with a celebrity, interspersed with news clips and music from the year in question. The format was devised by Kelvin's journalist daughter, Kiershen.

■ FOR THE first time BBC News has introduced compulsory redundancies among its senior current affairs producers, and up to 17 face the chop. The reason: the television service, which is already winning battles to make daily news more accessi-

ble, has taken its revenge over the boring quality of most specialist weekly current affairs series on law, housing and education that were once so loved by Sir John Birt.

Staff at the television service were able to act because guaranteed funding has been removed by BBC News and nobody else would pick up the tab. Of the roster, only *Black Britain* survives. Instead, the BBC News chief executive, Tony Hall, is setting aside £1 million for special topical programmes, such as the current *Inside the Lords* on BBC2. The inside view is that arrogant BBC News executives took too little notice of their critics, believing that as they were producing public service programming, they would be safe.

The bigger point is a serious one: if the BBC does not produce programmes on social policy issues, then nobody else will either.

■ HE WHO pays the piper calls the tune? This thought popped into my head at the launch of *Public Purposes* in Broadcasting: Funding the BBC, a grand event at Carlton House Terrace, where eight of Britain's leading economists gave brief resumes of their worthy contributions to the sponsored book.

Family enough none of them fundamentally questions the existence of the licence fee, or threatens to keep the BBC Chairman, Sir Christopher Bland awake at night. The fees



paid by the BBC for each chapter? Some £5,000 to £10,000.

■ CAMELOT is about to renew its agreement with the BBC to screen the National Lottery. I hear that Bazal Productions, which won the competition to supply a new programme starting in six weeks' time, will now run the draw at the beginning. But it ran into trouble over plans to roll the balls one by one to settle bones of contention between people: eg, should a neighbour's overhanging tree be cut down?

But Camelot has been dazzled by the success of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* and hopes that the producer, Celador, will come up with an even better look after Bazal's 13-show run ends.

■ ROWAN ATKINSON is being wooed to bring back his Blackadder character for the Millennium Experience. But I hear that his production company, Tiger Aspect Productions, is less than thrilled. First, at the leak and, secondly, at the prospect that his hottest property, having conquered Hollywood, should be sidetracked to save the Dome.



Millennium man? Rowan Atkinson as Blackadder

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media times

Anatomy of a hoax

C4 has made a programme on the couple who duped it, writes Carol Midgley

If two people had wasted £40,000 of your budget and several weeks of your time playing a spectacularly humiliating practical joke, what would you do? Report them to the police? Devote your life to sending taxis and pizza delivery boys to their front door? Or smile, forgive and say "shucks, it happens?"

Channel 4, with incredible magnanimity, seems to have opted for the last approach. Five months after a couple exposed the channel to ridicule by pretending to be father and daughter for the documentary *Daddy's Girl*, executives have not only kissed and made up with the pair, but made yet another film about them.

Daddy's Girl never saw the light of day. It was withdrawn hours before transmission after the girl's real father happened to see the programme trailer and alerted Channel 4 to the ruse. Excerpts from it, however, have been interwoven into Channel 4's latest offering, *Who's Been Framed?*, which pioneers a fatherhood-unexplored area of programme-making — the anatomy of the in-house cock-up.

During an hour-long *mea culpa*, Stuart Smith, 29, and Victoria Greetham, 19, explain how they hoodwinked the television crew for more than four months. Smith, who had pretended to be 39 and intensely possessive of his "daughter", says the hoax fulfilled a fantasy. "It felt good to be a middle-class racehorse trainer instead of a plumber's son with a criminal record," he says. "I swapped lives."

Greetham, a law student and aspiring model, displays a naive, insouciant attitude to a prank that could have cost the director, Edmund Coulthard, of *Blast* films, his career. "Not everything you see on TV is real," she says. "The documentary that was made was real,



The "father" and "daughter" of *Daddy's Girl*, Stuart Smith and Victoria Greetham. "The film-makers could easily have blown my cover," says Smith

it's just that there were some lies involved in it."

The hoax did, however, raise important questions about the future of the genre. Michael Jackson, the chief executive of Channel 4, said the episode was a new public abuse of the trust that once existed between film-makers and their subjects. Directors agree that, from now on, nobody will be taken at face value; subjects will be vetted right down to

their birth certificates, and "good faith" is history.

Others say that such a hoax was waiting to happen. The public's appetite for fame had been dangerously whetted by watching ordinary people become overnight celebrities thanks to the success of docu-soaps such as *Driving School* and *The Cruise*.

But will making a documentary about a documentary, and committing more money

to two subjects who have already shown themselves to be frauds, expose Channel 4 to accusations of excessive navel-gazing? After all, why should we believe the word of two proven liars the second time around?

The commissioning editor, Peter Dale, says: "We are not trying to make this a moral tale. That would seem self-congratulatory. We're trying to look at how the public sees us

now. This is part of the tables turning. The power is shifting. We are no longer like gods commanding the public to do what we want them to do, and this was a good way of exploring this change in attitude.

To some extent people now see broadcasters as a means to an end rather than purveyors of entertainment. They can use us to become famous. If it makes us more vigilant, that is not a bad thing."

The hoax has also fuelled the argument that the docu-soap is now a spent force. Ordinary Joes have been exploited to the point where it has all blown up in television's face.

Smith says he could easily have been found out. "They could have blown my cover. There is a book that lists all the trainers and they could have found out that I didn't exist."

In one scene of *Daddy's Girl*, included in the new programme, Stuart fights with Victoria's "boyfriend" after a night out. The undertone is that he seems to be incestuously obsessed with his daughter, which, in ratings terms, is almost too good to be true.

With the benefit of hindsight it is easy to blame sloppy research or poor judgment, but such a sophisticated con, involving dozens of people,

would probably convince most of us. When the hoax emerged Greetham gave *The Daily Telegraph's* reporter a mobile phone number for her real father to obtain a comment. It turned out to be another ruse — she had actually given them Smith's number and he supplied "outraged" quotes as if he were the real father.

Peter Moore, who commissioned the film for Channel 4, admits that the hoax angered and embarrassed him, but concedes: "Perhaps sometimes we believe the story presented to us because we so want it to be true."

During the programme Smith tells us he and Greetham have split up. He has lost his job at a Huddersfield pub but does not regret the scam: "I get a kick out of this and it keeps me off drugs."

Peter Dale says the film gives an insight into a man so desperate for fame and an escape from the mundanity of life that he went to these lengths. "When you get behind the facade you see quite a troubled man," he says. "He felt he was living out some kind of scheme to show that he would have been an achiever if he had been given another life."

Perhaps we believe a story because we want it to be true

Welcome to the real-life Corrie St

Maureen Paton reports on Newsnight's new docusoap

The stock of the docu-
soap has never been
lower. And although
a recent BBC Choice docu-
mentary asked whether rating-
hungry broadcasters had gone
too far in depicting, and some-
times distorting, real people's
lives, BBC's *Newsnight* has
emerged as a surprise player
in this field.

As part of the first re-
vamp in its 10-year history,
the programme has introduced
a docu-soap about a
run-down, crime-ridden
area of Salford in Greater
Manchester. The commentary
is being voiced by Jeremy
Paxman, *Newsnight's*
best-known presenter, en-
suring an instantly recog-
nised name for a television
experiment that will run for
two years.

Salford City Council decid-
ed it would co-operate with
Newsnight on the war-
rent-and-all docu-soap, *Real Es-
tates*, as the area's image is
already so negative that, as
the council's public relations
chief admits, it
has little to lose
from the expo-
sure. What we
will be seeing is
a real-life *Coronation Street*.

Tenants from
the tiny (privately
owned) Lang-
worthy estate,
whose rooftops
are featured dur-
ing the opening
credits of the
long-running
Granada TV
soap, and those
from nearby Ordsall (a
council-owned estate)
will live under the gaze of
the cameras for the next 24
months in an effort to test
the effect of government ini-
tiatives on the lives of the
underprivileged.

With 15-minute snapshots
of their lives broadcast in
fortnightly or monthly seg-
ments, a group of families
— ranging from a hand-
pressed single mother to
vulnerable pensioners
are likely to become almost
as familiar to viewers as the
characters from *The Street*.

The production team be-
hind *Real Estates*, Sandra
Jones and Pam Giddy, are
aiming for the grittiness of a
Ken Loach film but without
the preordained agenda.
Feedback from the first
screening last month, in
which families were inter-
viewed about their living
conditions, was positive.
The second instalment of
Real Estates, broadcast last
week, dealt with residents'
fears of burglary, and coin-
cided with *Newsnight's* lead
item about Jack Straw's
"three strikes and you are
out" burglary policy.

Further reports will be
regularly slotted into the
Newsnight format, with the

schedule being dictated
an extent by the content
Newsnight.

"We wanted to track it
effect that Government is
trying to have on the
community," says Sir
Kevill, the Editor of *News-
night*. "Only by pursuing
over the long term will you
see whether government
policy makes a difference
and the length of the pro-
gramme is unique to a
news programme. I won't
hope that it becomes
quintessential viewing for
politicians. It will certainly
stem from having to
cover a few focus groups."

"One could call this a re-
al-life soap in the sense that
you will want to know what
happens next. We'll be
giving advice about whether
identify minors, for instance.
But we aim to do everything
as openly as possible."

By the use of inexpensive
digital video cameras
natural light, the costs have
been absorbed into *News-
night's* annual
million budget.

Carol Lay,
Salford council
head of com-
munications, a
public relations
says: "Salford
national time is
so poor that I
decided we
didn't get on
to lose. In fact,
we've got a lot
gain. I was so
impressed by
time they re-
prepared to
voice to the project, which
is so different from the
way that the media
change in and out of an
area."

She also realised
Newsnight will, in effect
monitoring an ambitious
urban regeneration survey
that includes the £120-
million Lowry Arts
Centre, which will open this
year.

Despite the risk of
ing scare stories about
benefits drives, or worse, as
believes that *Newsnight's*
long-term approach will
into context the kind of
every trap that keeps a
mother of three, Ania
Gaffney, 26, on the dole
£105 a week.

She will be featured
Thursday's episode of *Real
Estates*, which will focus
single mothers. Her mo-
tion in giving unpaid time to
camera is simple: "I want
the world to see that people
like us don't deserve it.
This is how my life
may end up — and it scares
me."

Jones and Giddy,
says, always ring in
advance to "give me time
put some make-up on". It
matters to be seen how
fully the cameras can re-
ality without heighten
the drama.

I would hope that it becomes required viewing for politicians

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Offer open to schools registered in the UK only. Schools can obtain information and registration forms by calling 017-461 3362.

SEE THE BACK PAGE OF SECTION ONE FOR TODAY'S TOKEN
CHANGING TIMES

media watch

THE latest national news-
paper circulation figures, for
July to December 1998, show
that the *Financial Times* con-
tinues to perform more strong-
ly than the rest of the market
— up by 11.6 per cent, or
38,000 copies year on year.

All of the other national
broadsheets lost circulation,
apart from *The Sunday Times*,
which managed to hold fairly
steadily at 13 million copies per
issue.

Sales of *The Daily Tele-
graph* are slipping back
towards the million mark,
down by 44,022, year on year,
to 1,054,418. *The Times*
dropped 40,000 to 732,000.
Sunday Express, which at
present has a monthly audit
was down 3,054 in December,
compared with November, to
47,632 copies.

Only the two Mail titles are
matching the FT's progress.
The Daily Mail gained 112,415
copies. *The Mail on Sunday*
was up 92,899.

The *Express* continues to
suffer badly, this time drop-
ping 7 per cent year on year.
Its recent TV ad campaign,
created by St Luke's (its third
agency in a year), is unlikely
to reverse the decline. The
Express on Sunday is also in
the doldrums, down by 113,279
copies. To add to the gloom,

Express Newspapers this
week removed the Sunday
paper's Editor, Amanda
Plattell, and dismissed its
news editor, Ian Walker, cit-
ing poor sales as the reason.
The Mirror is the only popu-
lar tabloid to report an

increase in its circulation —
up by 13,940 to 234 million.
However, the Sunday red-
tops did not fare so well: the
Sunday Mirror shed 257,510
in sales; the *News of the
World*, still the biggest seller,
fell by more than 200,000 cop-

ies, and the *Sunday People*
lost 177,844 copies.

MediaTel's online edit
information and analysis
service is accessed via the Internet
at <http://www.mediatech.co.uk>
(0171-439 7575).

ABC YEAR ON YEAR COMPARISONS					
TITLE	JUL '97 DEC '97	JUL '98 DEC '98	ACTUAL CHANGE	% CHANGE	
Daily Mail	2,237,949	2,350,364	112,415	5	
Daily Star	712,182	646,314	-65,868	-9	
Daily Telegraph	1,098,440	1,054,418	-44,022	-4	
Express	1,202,291	1,118,700	-83,591	-7	
Express on Sunday	1,140,328	1,027,049	-113,279	-9	
Financial Times	328,793	366,969	38,176	11	
Guardian	403,999	391,919	-12,080	-3	
Independent	260,223	221,398	-38,825	-14	
Independent on Sunday	287,543	253,907	-33,636	-11	
Mail on Sunday	2,219,430	2,312,329	92,899	4	
Mirror	2,324,109	2,338,049	13,940	0	
News of the World	4,425,708	4,225,599	-200,109	-4	
Observer	439,573	398,983	-40,590	-9	
Sun	3,779,605	3,675,286	-104,319	-2	
Sunday Mirror	2,276,089	1,988,579	-287,510	-12	
Sunday People	1,895,121	1,717,277	-177,844	-9	
Sunday Telegraph	887,204	829,032	-58,172	-6	
Sunday Times	1,343,324	1,349,925	6,601	0	
Times	792,151	751,862	-40,289	-5	
TOTAL	28,054,062	27,017,969	-1,036,103	-3	



The starry-sky logo, a new promotion campaign and updated jingles are part of Mark Byford's drive to give the World Service a global identity, which is instantly recognisable

A 'brand' new World Service

The BBC is giving its overseas output a new global image. But will this rebranding destroy its diversity? Meg Carter reports

The BBC World Service may broadcast to the world — for the time being at least — but is it a global brand? This is the conundrum puzzling BBC managers and fuelling the latest row about proposals for further programme cuts.

The BBC says the service must be more "listener-focused" more commercially competitive and better promoted internationally to survive. But is it a corporation right?

Observers were quick to condemn last weekend's leaks of further programming cuts. Denying to reports, Mark Byford, World Service chief executive, said his defence in a letter to *The Guardian* was that the BBC's commitment to its listeners was its core business. It was a commitment to maintain the World Service's position as the world's leading international broadcaster.

What he didn't say, however, was that his "rebranding" was already advanced. Managers at the BBC are already rebranding and positioning the service with several key developments introduced this month.

The is a new logo — a star-

ry night-sky motif — developed by the designers Lambie-Nairn as part of a unified approach to promoting the English-language service and the 43 local-language services that the World Service broadcasts. A promotional campaign is being developed by the advertising agency Leagas Delaney, and a company will be appointed soon to update on-air promotions and jingles.

A branded breakfast-show format, *The World Today*, is being rolled out across the World Service's three regional English-language zones. This means that listeners in America, Europe, Africa and Asia Pacific will soon hear the same news-show format, although it will be produced and scheduled regionally. Other parts of the English-language output will be similarly rebranded.

All of this is an investment to ensure future audiences, BBC managers say. But is it? The most important thing is programming, not packaging,

one longstanding World Service producer laments. "Any attempt to refocus resources, such as cutting foreign language output, is an attempt to narrow the World Service's output and will dilute the role it plays."

With the World Service directly funded by the Foreign Office, its traditional and unique role in promoting objective news and British values should be sacrosanct, many believe. Yet plans are said to be afoot to cut services attracting low or falling audiences.

John Tusa, the former managing director of the World Service, says: "Just because you're sixth out of eight [in terms of listeners] in the Far East doesn't mean you are not important. Unless you have a total view of how the English service fits with local-language services you cannot draw sensible conclusions. There is some evidence that where both English and local-language services are available,

total World Service listening is greater."

On one level, the logic of refocusing the World Service seems sound. Much has changed since it was launched in 1932. Competition between news providers has increased and the BBC has launched several international commercial television services, including BBC Choice and BBC World.

Every broadcaster must work harder to compete for audiences now," says Alan Booth, the controller of marketing and communications for the World Service. "We have to be more responsive to listeners' needs." To achieve this, he co-ordinated a strategic review of the service's image and perceived role.

"We found that there was no clear or consistent understanding of the World Service brand," he says. One reason for this was that the service was referred to and promoted

locally in a variety of ways. Perceptions of the World Service also vary. Many listeners relied on it as an impartial provider of accurate news, others viewed it primarily as an educational tool, while for many more it provided a welcome reminder of home.

"Our brief," says Liz Dunning, the marketing director of Lambie-Nairn, "was to develop a more coherent World Service brand. You build strong global brands by having just one way of saying Coca-Cola is Coca-Cola, or Marlboro is Marlboro." To this end, BBC World Service is being promoted from this month, as "the world's reference point" — visually depicted by stars in a night sky.

Sceptics, however, remain unconvinced that this approach is appropriate. "BBC World Service is a global brand already," Tusa says. "That's not to say it is seen in the same way all over the world. In each area where it is received, it means something different to local audiences. But this is a strength, not a weakness. They are looking at the brand in exactly the wrong sort of way."

Critics also question whether this approach can work if investment in programming — particularly the foreign-language output, which 100 million of the World Service's 134 million listeners currently tune in to — is reduced.

Exact details of how funding will be allocated over the next three years are expected in two weeks. But the steps that have already been taken towards unifying, standardising and publicising English-language output provide a grim indication of how the service's emphasis will change.

Film industry cries out for fresh script

A sensible person would not hold their breath waiting for the Government to do much to boost the UK's film and television industry. The most that can be expected in a good year is a modest tax concession.

Even film industry quangos, recycling public money in one way or another, do not have a sparkling record when it comes to backing potential hits. They seem irresistibly attracted to turkeys.

But symbolism and a little loving care can help. Yesterday Brian Wilson, the Trade Minister, set off for America on a trip around the British outposts of film and television.

He will be the first minister from the Department of Trade and Industry to visit the British Film Office in Los Angeles, set up after a recent review of film policy.

Next week he will visit the National Association of Television Executives exhibition in New Orleans, the largest television trade fair in the world, which is attended by delegates from more than 90 countries. Seventy-six UK companies will be showing their wares there.

This ministerial attention for one of the UK's growth industries is welcome. Even more welcome is the fact that 70 of those companies received DTI grants to attend. Wilson recognises, however, that he has no magic wand to wave but at least his presence, interest and willingness to learn are encouraging.

For all the talk of the UK being a world-class player in film and television, the harsh reality is that in 1997 exports totalled a relatively modest £1.2 billion. In spite of the occasional Oscar, quality television and language advantage, the UK industry still had a trade deficit of £272 million.

The Government can help mainly in practical areas such as strengthening copyright and trying to boost exports. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is trying to simplify the process of encouraging the film industry by putting together a single film industry body, although it is taking its time.

There are a few hopeful signs of progress in the industry. This week Carlton Communications strengthened its television and film library with the \$150 million (£89 million) purchase of the ITC library, containing everything from *The Saint* to *On Golden Pond*, from Universal Studios.

And the BBC is now making progress in the United States with its BBC America channel, while children's programme-makers such as Hit Entertainment and Brit Allcroft are taking their shows around the world. Pearson has also just sold a new science-fiction-cum-X-Files series to the American networks.

The UK's commercial broadcasters, many believe, have been far too timid and insular when it comes to making programmes for world markets, particularly the US. They have been busy fighting parochial battles against each other and the BBC, and are only just beginning to see the international possibilities.

Companies such as Pearson have become thoroughly international through the purchase of programme-makers such as Grundy and All American. But Pearson's great weakness is that it does not own any broadcasters apart from its stake in Channel 5.

The "content is king" cliché may hold true to an extent, but surely content and distribution are better. This is where the Government can help. Modest relaxation in broadcasting and merger rules would allow the creation of weightier British media companies that could tackle world markets, reverse the television and film deficit and prove that the British industry really is first-class, not only in prestige and honours but in sales as well.



Ali doesn't belong in ads

IS ONE OF our heroes safe? First, John Lennon appears in the One 2 One campaign alongside Chris Evans, now comes Muhammad Ali for the Equitable Life. The difference is, of course, that Ali finally agreed to appear in one of the hardest ads he has been offered, and Lennon had no choice.

There is no doubt that it's a coup to land Ali. His mere appearance demands the viewer's attention — as did Henry Kissinger's presence in a recent *Economist*. Make no mistake, it is stunning to see Ali on the screen — in the past and, more importantly, in the present. Asked by a little boy basketball player what he would be if he weren't a boxer, the fresh-faced Ali of all our yesterdays answers, by way of old footage: "If I was a garbage man, I'd be the greatest garbage man in the world. I'd be the greatest whatever I'd have done."

Cuts to the present and a slower, sadder Ali cruises around in the back of a limo with onlookers standing starstruck in the street. The ad ends with the basketball player trying to punch Ali, but the greaser holds him at arm's length. The ad frame says "Anything's possible when it's an Equitable Life." But by then who's paying attention? I was so dumbstruck by Ali's reduced state that I was immune to the advertiser.

That sets your mind spinning in all directions, none of them towards Equitable Life. It's not hairs-standing-up-the-back-of-your-neck emotional, nor is it positive enough to make you empathise with the idea that you can retire idly still be the greatest. It may be because the soundtrack is prosaic, or that the director tries too hard to be clever. Or where my head spun was towards Ali. Ali memories and what they evoke about my younger self. I couldn't then take the leap to the Equitable Life. If Muhammad Ali is in a commercial,



It should be really special, and this just isn't. It may be that our heroes should be allowed to rest in their youthful glory, deep within the recesses of our minds.

So here's a plea to admen everywhere: lay off J.P.R. Williams and Ian Botham; Debbie Harry and David Bowie; Peter O'Toole and Julie Christie. Most of all, never use so much as a frame of Peter Lorimer — unless it's from the early Seventies, of course.

MARKS & SPENCER has never advertised consistently, at least not like its rivals. A £3-million-a-yearish budget is a quarter of that of the likes of C&A and Debenhams, and a tenth in some years of what Sainsbury's and Tesco spend.

M&S never believed it had to. Its ubiquitous presence on the high street, and unwavering commitment to high standards and value-for-money products,



Past glory: the slower, sadder Ali

have defined a different type of marketing strategy.

The former management, under Sir Richard Greenbury, could hardly countenance advertising, and certainly not on television. M&S's image had been so unimpeachable for so long that any association with the black art was deemed counter-productive. And in a company where running out of stock is a crime, the danger with advertising is that it can work too well.

Even real positives — the behind-the-scenes role of such designers as Paul Smith, and the great improvements in the quality of ranges such as men's suits — were kept quiet. Still, the occasional campaigns for strawberries in summer or a new range of underwear could clear shelves overnight. Ironically, even the three-night flirtation with television at Christmas resulted in record footfall.

The truth is that M&S has always been a buying-led, not marketing-led, company. This autumn the buyers got it wrong. Now the new chief executive, Peter Salisbury, has appointed a 29-year M&S veteran, Peter Benfield, as its first marketing director for UK retail. Benfield's role was planned long before the sales slump and profits warning, but it would be naive not to believe that recent events have highlighted M&S's reactionary approach to marketing. This was relatively harmless when it was unchallenged as Britain's best retailer, particularly in food. But the competition has improved. Nobody can afford to be out-marketed — just look at how Tesco has stolen a march over Sainsbury's.

In 1999 it seems perverse to write about a retailer as sophisticated as M&S having to embrace marketing. Few doubt that, once it does, it will profit hugely and wonder what it was scared of all those years.

Stefano Hatfield is the Editor of Campaign.

DIGITALONE

DIGITAL SOUND PROGRAMME SERVICE CONTRACTS

Registration of interest in tendering for channels on the national commercial digital radio multiplex.

Closing date for Registration 12th February 1999

Digital One Limited, which has been awarded the sole licence to operate the commercial national digital radio multiplex, is now inviting expressions of interest from those who want to be included in the selection and contractual process for providers of sound programme services.

There are currently three available digital sound programme service channels identified below. Digital One may consider proposals to provide any of the other audio programmes services outlined in its licence application, although capacity is currently reserved for the existing independent national broadcasters and other proposed service providers identified in that application. Digital One may also consider making available capacity instead for other programme services which would extend listener choice and which are supported by quality resources and research.

- 1 Soft Adult Contemporary.** This channel will be mainly music based, broadly targeted at adults aged 25 to 44 and will operate 24 hours a day in stereo.
- 2 Plays, Books and Comedy Channel.** This channel will be predominantly a speech based service consisting of serialised plays, books and comedy programmes and is proposed to operate in mono for 13 hours a day.
- 3 Club Dance Music Channel.** A music station targeted at adults between 15 and 34, operating throughout the night for 11 hours in stereo.

Applicants should respond in writing by 12th February 1999 but Digital One reserves the right to extend this date or contract with other parties. It is expected that contracts will be offered to successful applicants in March 1999.

Further information about the multiplex, the available channels, target audiences and requirements of service providers is available from:

Quentin Howard, Chief Executive,
Digital One Limited, 7 Swallow Place, Oxford Circus, London W1A 5NT

To be included in the tender process, please contact Quentin Howard in writing, indicating which channel or channels you wish to apply for. Responding to this advertisement does not commit you to proceeding with the tender process.

Further information on the qualifications to be a digital sound programme service provider is available from the Radio Authority.

THE TIMES
EDUCATION

A lesson from church schools

Tony Blair has sent his children to Roman Catholic schools for good reason, argues Tony Mooney

Cherie and Tony Blair had cause for quiet satisfaction when the GCSE league tables were published last month. The London Oratory, the school attended by their two sons Euan and Nicky, was named as the eighth most improved secondary school in England over the past three years.

As a school with 88 per cent of its pupils obtaining five GCSE passes at grade C or above, the Oratory again emphasised the academic advantages of a Roman Catholic education.

Now it has been announced that the Blairs' daughter Kathryn will also attend a Catholic school, in Hammersmith. Yet critics claim that these advantages are not real and that the apparently superior results are the result of covert selection. So how does one find out whether Catholic schools offer a better standard of education than their state counterparts?

Surprisingly, there has been little independent research into the topic in Britain. However, one study in 1990 did analyse the differences in examination performance of secondary schools in the former Inner London Education Authority. It found that after taking background factors into account, "the examination performance of students attending Roman Catholic schools is higher than those of students attending county schools".

Another clue comes from the Chief Inspector of Schools. Since his inspectors have started to name very good and excellent schools, the growing list looks as if it has been obtained from a Vatican education propaganda booklet.

The Americans have been more systematic in their analysis of the value of Catholic schools. Researchers at the University of Michigan followed more than 3,000 students from 184 high schools and found that Catholic schools, despite not having students who were advantaged

culturally, economically or academically, were pushing them harder in mathematics than other types of school. A greater percentage of pupils took high-level maths courses and this was consistent across the ability range, suggesting that Catholic schools are "especially equitable in who completes advanced course work".

A large-scale inquiry into the early-school and post-school records of about 60,000 students in more than 1,000 high schools found that Catholic schools were performing much better on a number of fronts than their state counterparts. This was despite the fact that they had less money and fewer well-paid teachers who taught larger classes of pupils who were mainly from the more difficult areas.

The study found that it was the most disadvantaged students (blacks, Hispanics and those from low socio-economic backgrounds) who were most likely to profit from attending Catholic secondary schools. Pupils with discipline problems were likely to benefit even more from their education than those who were well behaved. This was probably because the Catholic schools contained their discipline problems without resorting to expulsions at the same rate as state schools.

But why are Catholic schools so successful in educating young people? Dr Andrew Morris, the deputy executive secretary of the Diocesan Schools Commission in Birmingham, offered some reasons in the journal *Research Papers in Education*, also drawing on recent doctoral research undertaken at Warwick University.

Dr Morris argues that Catholic schools have an inbuilt advantage because of the coherence and distinctiveness of the community they serve. Parental attitudes, lifestyle, manner of speaking and thinking are all "consonant with the school and there is, therefore, a process of mutual reinforcement". According to Dr Morris, it is



Sacred Heart High School in Hammersmith has the approval of the Blairs

the strength of teacher commitment to schools that makes them such places of academic excellence. Roman Catholic teachers who go out of their way to work in Catholic schools will often see the school as a religious community and their "self-image and level of commitment may be enhanced and a virtuous circle established".

The expectations of its teachers by the Catholic Church also play a part in the creation of teaching excellence. Catholic schools are expected to give affection, respect and service to their pupils beyond that required by educational law or other caring professions.

Another feature is good discipline. Dr Morris believes that this emanates from several sources. The fact that Catholic schools operate within a hier-

archical and religious culture gives both parents and teachers greater potential for social control. "As such," he adds, "it helps to create a climate of conformity that is likely to assist academic achievement."

Student ease within Catholic schools may also come from the knowledge that in the light of Christian doctrines, "transgression of school norms, if acknowledged and repented, will not necessarily result in being ostracised". This is why questions of discipline and possible exclusion from Catholic schools causes so much angst to those who have to make the decisions.

There is little debate in Britain on why Catholic schools are academically and socially effective. Government-sponsored research would not be wasted — the knowledge acquired might be of value in improving all schools.

Acting up at the RSC

Theatre studies are a valuable practical experience, says George Turnbull

Dramatic though it may seem, every drama student dreams of performing on the big stage, and last week a company of 34 A-level students took to the boards at the Royal Shakespeare Company's The Other Place theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. For the first time, students from the School of Performing Arts at Stratford-upon-Avon College were given the opportunity to perform five, 30-minute plays three times a day for two days. The plays, each an original, were created for the practical part of the A level, which accounts for 40 per cent of the final assessment. Despite the creative freedom, stringent exam rules still applied.

The plays were performed as professional productions before an audience, but the lecturers were not allowed to direct. Nevertheless, the calibre of the work was high. Stratford is one of the most sought-after drama colleges in the country and students travel from as far as Birmingham.



A-level drama at the RSC under exam rules. The work counts towards the final assessment

Some alumni, such as the comedian Ben Elton, even moved to the area just to attend the college.

Drama, it seems, is not just for potential Kate Winslets or Joseph Fiennes: it has a positive influence on those entering other "performance" professions. Francesca McVeigh, 18, who is going to study law at University College London, says: "I want to be a barrister. And this course gives us confidence, an ability to communi-

cate, to work as a team and to lead others. Problem-solving comes naturally, too, when you are putting a show together. Acting is important to me... after all, that's what barristers do."

Mark Taylor, the school head, agrees. "Role play is an essential part of learning and the key skills mentioned by Francesca are essential to survival in competitive international companies," he says. "Changes to A levels now be-

ing developed for introduction next year will ensure that their importance will be emphasised, not only within theatre studies but across the whole A-level and GNVQ provision."

The original A level in theatre studies was developed through the college more than 20 years ago and is examined by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance. Nationally, more than 9,000 students sit the examination.

First crack in the fees ceiling

The university fee regime which has prompted a group of Oxford students to risk glittering academic careers without the slightest prospect of advancing their cause may seem positively benign a few years from now. Those who cautioned that £1,000 a year would be the thin end of a much larger wedge seem certain to be proved right before long.

Having found that the demand for places has easily withstood the introduction of fees, the leading universities are looking forward to a relaxation of the Government's £1,000 limit. Oxford's business school plans for a degree costing up to £15,000 a year may be at the extreme end of the continuum, but for those competing in the world market, the present fee income is a drop in the ocean.

Rethinking Higher Education, a pamphlet published today by the Institute for Economic Affairs, makes the case for a sharp increase in the student contribution to the cost of higher education. Professor Thomas Lange, director of the Centre for Labour Market Studies at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, questions the need for even the current size of the university system, let alone further expansion. He argues that more of the financial burden should fall on the students because they benefit most.

Professor Lange's case rests partly on contentious and dated calculations on the rate of return to individuals and the State from higher education. They suggest that because of the level of public spending, the economic benefit to the UK is less than in countries such as America and France. The advantage to the individual is also less than in most developed nations, but it is higher than the "social return".

More recent attempts at the same exercise have suggested that the gap between private and social benefits has narrowed greatly. With the abolition of grants and the advent of tuition fees, it is safe to assume that there will be little difference in years to come if graduates' employment prospects are as poor as Professor Lange predicts, the individual benefits may soon be minimal.

As the number of students rises again, Professor Lange believes that higher education will serve mainly as a screening process for employers. The quality of many courses and the calibre of students will be so low and the competition for jobs so fierce that higher education will confer the credentials necessary for success in the race for employment without raising productivity or skills levels. He

is particularly scathing about the likely effect on jobs, citing Germany as an example of high levels of qualifications and unemployment. "The mystifying assumption that, by improving Britain's education and training record, somehow unemployment will disappear, is not just debatable: it is misleading at best and at worst it is utter nonsense."

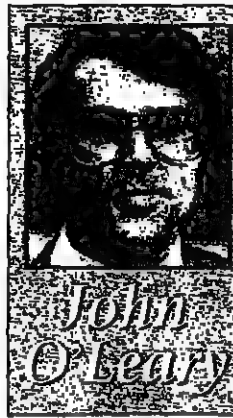
The thesis does not square with the recent forecasts commissioned by the Department for Education and Employment, which saw the potential for another 1.5 million graduate jobs over a ten-year period. But it raises the valid question of what level of fees students will be willing to pay if the financial advantages of higher education become more marginal.

Professor Lange makes a logical case for universities to be set free to charge what the market will bear, leaving students to vote with their feet for a smaller higher education system in which low-quality courses go to the wall. Yet can any government afford to leave access to the top universities entirely at the mercy of the market?

Every proponent of unfettered tuition fees assumes that bursary funds will be available for those who cannot afford to pay thousands of pounds a year for a degree course. Invariably, American universities are quoted as the model to emulate. But the level of donations to American universities by graduates and corporations is out of all proportion to the British system, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Only by charging even higher fees to those who can afford to pay would our universities be able to build up the funds necessary for "needs-blind" admissions.

The burden on a resentful and electorally crucial middle class would be considerable because the idea that graduates would be the ones to repay the costs of tuition is already a myth in many homes.

With the means-testing of student loans, the Government has limited still further the availability of affordable finance for undergraduates. Increasingly, parents are the paymasters as university replaces independent education as a drain on the family budget. The £1,000 limit is unlikely to change before the next election, but few would bet on it remaining for long thereafter. The new administration will have a fine balance to strike between popular pressures and the need to preserve the quality of higher education.



John O'Leary

FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN THE TIMES

There's still time for schools to register



It is not too late for your local school to join in our Free Books for Schools promotion.

The Times, with The Sunday Times and Walkers crisps and snacks, offers you the chance to take part in Britain's biggest books giveaway. Its aim is simple: to help schools to provide more books for pupils to expand their imaginations, creativity and curiosity. Anyone and everyone — parents, pupils, teachers, friends and relatives — can join in the scheme, simply by collecting tokens from The Times, The Sunday Times and Walkers snacks.

There are more than 150 titles for schools to choose from, including novels, atlases, picture

books, fiction and non-fiction, wildlife and science, dictionaries and audio and Braille titles. Each book requires either 100, 250 or 500 tokens. The books are suitable for ages five to 16 and are divided into approximate reading abilities from key stage 1 to key stage 4, and P1 to S6 in Scotland.

Schools simply select their free books from a list of approved titles and send off enough tokens for their order. Many of the titles can be ordered for as little as 100 tokens each.

Tokens will appear every day in The Times until March 27 and four tokens are published weekly in The Sunday Times. Tokens are also appearing in The Sun and the News of the World.



THE TIMES

SCHOOL REGISTRATION FORM

This form must be completed only by school teachers. To get your free books for schools kit to participate in the scheme, complete full details of your school in block capitals below and send form to: Free Books for Schools, Registrations, FREEPOST (LE5 004), Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7BR. Closing date February 28, 1999.

School name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
Phone _____ Fax _____
Our nominated member of staff is _____
Position in school _____
Signed _____

For information purposes only:
1. Please state your local education authority _____
2. Please state the number of pupils at your school _____

Although there is no obligation or cost associated with registering for the Free Books for Schools promotion, please only register for this scheme if you intend to participate.

This enables us to invest as much money as possible in supplying free books to participating schools.

COLLINS

Please note only schools can register. We may wish to use the information provided for marketing purposes.

If you do not wish to receive any further information from News International plc and/or Walkers Snack Foods Limited, please tick here. ☐ Code 01

CHANGING TIMES

Richard Evans expects young rider to top Ascot bill

Saleel can spearhead double for Forristal

ON AN afternoon when every pound of lead in the saddle of runners at Ascot will be an onerous burden, the ability to remove weight from a horse's back using the claiming allowance of amateur or conditional riders could prove invaluable.

This points to Richie Forristal enjoying the riding day of his life in today's glitzy conditions. The young Irish amateur, voted point-to-point rider of the year last season, has been a revelation in the National Hunt ranks this term and, with 20 winners, is only four behind Alan Dempsey, who has enjoyed the advantage of a constant supply of chances from the powerful Mary Reveley yard.

Forristal is quite small by jump-jockey standards, weighing around 9 stone, but is strong as well as stylish and is already on the books of Dave Roberts, the top jockey's agent. In the Silver Doctor Open Novices' Handicap (2.05), he teams up with Saleel, with whom he has forged a successful partnership. Victories in similarly soft



ground at Market Rasen and Folkestone, plus an even better performance in defeat just behind the useful Kingsmark, highlight his chance from a favourable mark on his handicap debut. Lucy Wadham, who took out a full licence last summer having earlier held a permit, boasts a 42 per cent strike-rate with runners under Rules and has her seven-year-old in rude health.

Toby Balding, Taufan Boy's trainer, should get close in the Rosling King Hurdle (3.40) with Brave Tornado, another mudlark who is chasing a treble after wins at Ascot and Cheltenham. However, the pair likely to fight out the finish are Jim Old's Three Farthings and The Butterwick Kid, ridden by Forristal.

Three Farthings showed markedly improved form to win on his seasonal reappearance at Wincanton on Boxing Day and, being a half-brother to Simpson, should be seen to even better effect over this longer trip. His hurdling is still open to improvement, which sways me marginally in favour of The Butterwick Kid.

Although Richard Fahey's runner is 4lb out of the handicap, Forristal's 5lb claim compensates and the dual-purpose performer looked one to follow after winning with ease at Wetherby over Christmas. His jumping in the mud was particularly fluent that day and he quickened away from his rivals in the manner of an improving performer.

Three-runner novice chases, where tactics invariably play an important role, are not ideal betting races and, while Nipper Reed is chosen for the P.M.L. Lightning Chase (2.40), a watching brief is advised.

The shape of the rescheduled Victor Chandler Chase (3.10) has changed since Saturday with the defection of Or Royal, but weight for the abandoned running, and that could have a significant impact on the result. Calibate now heads the weights and that could prove too much for this sparely-made eight-year-old.

By contrast, the rise in the weights will favour Get Real, but Nicky Henderson's front-running course and distance winner may find this heavy ground against him. Monnaie Fortie has also shown his best form on faster going.

However, in a tricky race, Hill Society, a short-head second to Champagne in the Arkle Trophy last March, just gets the nod ahead of Call Equine, who returns from a 43-day absence but invariably runs well fresh.



Nipper Reed has just two rivals as he chases a treble in the P.M.L. Lightning Novices' Chase at Ascot today

ASCOT

12.30 Buckland Lad
1.00 Buckside
1.30 Native Fling
2.05 Taufan Boy

Timekeeper's top rating: 3.10 GET REAL

GOING: MUDDY, HEAVY, CHASERS: SOFT (HEAVY IN PLACES)
TOTE JACKPOT MEETING

12.30 DURHAM RANGER HANDICAP CHASE

(£4,788; 2m 31 110yds) (8 runners)

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2.05 SILVER DOCTOR OPEN NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE

(£3,328; 3m) (5 runners)

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MOTOR RACING

Toyota opt to go solo in the fast lane

By Kevin Eason

THE lure of Formula One is tempting yet another leading car maker into an ambitious programme that could cost more than £250 million just to get on to the grand prix grid.

Toyota, the third-largest motor manufacturer in the world, announced yesterday that it wants to join the Formula One racing circuit, probably in 2003.

The decision stakes up the prospect of a contest between Toyota and Honda, its Japanese rival, which comes to Formula One next year with its own team. Moreover, the wider significance will not escape teams competing at present: they are concerned about whether they can survive a future that looks as if it will be dominated by multinational corporations.

Like Honda, Toyota seems to want to go it alone by making both the engines and chassis — a departure from the conventions of the sport in which motor manufacturers have usually been happy to supply engines to independent teams. Hiroshi Okuda, the Toyota president, has appointed André de Cortanze, who oversees the company's efforts in the Le Mans 24-hour Race, to set up a base in Germany in preparation. Several teams in Formula One would have been hoping for Toyota to choose a partnership, while Jordan uses engines from Mugen-Honda, a deal that might yet be usurped by the full entry of a Honda works team.

Dr Mark Jenkins, senior lecturer at the Cranfield School of Management, said that the entry of Honda and Toyota signals the end of the age of the motor racing entrepreneur, of men such as Sir Frank Williams and Eddie Jordan. He believes that Formula One will be ruled from the boardrooms of big business. Not only will the mavericks of the sport be overwhelmed, but the implications for the British motorsport industry, which is worth £1.5 billion a year to the country and employs 150,000 people, could be far more serious. Formula One faces the possibility of a "brain drain" as companies, such as Toyota and Honda, poach the best talent from their activities in their home states or convenient locations, such as Germany. Already, Honda

is employing members of the now defunct Tyrrell team, but it has not given any commitment to working from Great Britain.

"Formula One has traditionally been located in the Golden Triangle bordered by Cambridge, Oxford and Reading, known as Motor Sport Valley," Jenkins said. "But if manufacturers want to bring things in-house, they will have no particular commitment to Britain, only to their own needs and costs."

The human face of Formula One also faces extinction. Pioneers, such as Enzo Ferrari, founded a tradition of entrepreneurship that is continued today by men such as Williams, Jordan, Giancarlo Minardi and Peter Sauber.

Jenkins gave warning that the days when Williams could cadge tyres from rivals and conduct business from a telephone box to get his grand prix team on the grid would be replaced by corporations that want the worldwide publicity that is offered by Formula One. In the meantime, Toyota might have to buy out one of the independents to realise its ambitions.

"Formula One has traditionally been dominated by teams set up by entrepreneurs who have developed relatively small companies that can respond very quickly to the demands placed on them by Formula One racing," Jenkins added, "but the signs are that the motor manufacturers want more control. They want to differentiate their products in the marketplace from the competition and, to do that, they want their own teams. Now Toyota is entering, the question is how long before the other manufacturers in Formula One decide they have to do the same?"

Whatever happens, the prospects of another Eddie Jordan emerging to run an independent team in the present, expensive climate of Formula One seem to be remote. When Jordan ended his first season in Formula One in 1991, he was £4.5 million in debt and scoured the circuits for young and cheap drivers. In contrast, the British American Racing team starts this season with a five-year budget of £250 million and employs the second highest-paid driver in the sport, Jacques Villeneuve, on a £10 million salary.



Four years after seeking asylum, Dagne makes her senior women's international debut tomorrow

Refugee runs out of Africa into England team

David Powell on the Ethiopian athlete who made a brave dash for freedom

Dawn was just breaking and snow was beginning to fall out of a grey Durham sky when Birhan Dagne, two of her fellow-Ethiopian athletes and a coach slipped out of the university accommodation to which they had returned after the world cross-country championships the previous day. With just enough English to call a taxi, frightened and not knowing what fate might befall them, they headed for the local railway station while their team managers slept.

By mid-morning, the four had arrived at King's Cross, knowing nobody and nothing of the capital. All they could do was wait for an Ethiopian to pass by and ask for help. A woman, on her way to church, was the first they approached. Was she Ethiopian? "Yes," came the reply. Would she help these desperate runners on the run? "Yes," again. So began the process of seeking asylum in Great Britain as the woman escorted them to the nearest refugee centre.

Almost four years later, Dagne will become tomorrow the first African refugee to run for England. She has been selected for a senior women's team of three to contest the Coca-Cola International cross-country race in Belfast. Ironically, she could make her championship debut for Britain at the world cross-country championships in Belfast this March, competing against team-mates she abandoned in Durham on the last occasion that Britain hosted the event.

This could prove to be a landmark in British distance running. Paula Radcliffe and Jon Brown apart, Britain is anonymous at world-class in a section of athletics that is dominated by Africans. However, behind Dagne, there are Moroccan, Ethiopian and Somali athletes living and competing in Britain and waiting for their chance.

Dagne, 20, seized her moment to escape Ethiopia without warning her parents, although she had been planning it for a month. There was fear among the once-dominant Amhara of persecution by the new coalition government and Dagne claims to have been

severely beaten by a soldier while out training in preparation for Durham. After 46 months without seeing her parents, she said yesterday from her home in Bethnal Green: "I miss my family. I miss my country. I miss everything."

Nevertheless, making the best of it, she has married, learnt to speak English and has been granted asylum. By next year, she expects to have received the citizenship that she would need to compete at the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000.

"It has been very hard, a new life without my family," Dagne said. She has met one of her brothers in Switzerland, but has not seen any of her four other siblings since leaving Ethiopia. "My fami-

'She is a tough, single-minded lady to have achieved what she has in a strange country'

ly were very upset I did not tell anybody, but they are happy now that I run for Great Britain. I tell them I am happy because I am alive. In Ethiopia, maybe somebody would have killed me."

She recalls how, waiting on Durham station, she sat in fear. "We were waiting about an hour, a long, long time, and we were frightened," she said. "We thought we might be taken to prison or maybe killed."

Dagne's switch as an athlete, from Ethiopia to Great Britain, was cleared by the International Amateur Athletic Federation in November. "She must be a tough, single-minded lady to have achieved what she has in a strange country," Rita Brownlie, the England team manager, said.

Training in the British winter has been a shock to Dagne. "I do not like the cold," she said. "In Ethiopia, the sun shines for 12 months. It is a new life here in gloves." Just as it is a new life for her in an England vest.

BOXING: BIRMINGHAM HEAVYWEIGHT CAPITALISES ON KICK-START TO HIS CAREER

Reid gets British title chance

By Srikanth Sen, Boxing Correspondent

PELE REID, the Birmingham heavyweight, who is being tipped to follow in the footsteps of Lennox Lewis, will get the chance to underline his potential when he challenges Jufus Francis, of Peckham, for the British championship at York Hall on January 30.

Francis was to have met Danny Williams, another Londoner, but, when the challenger pulled out with an eye injury, Reid was called in. He was in training to challenge Vitali Klitschko, of Ukraine, for the European title, but Frank Warren, the promoter, convinced him that the British title was more important. "Anyway, Klitschko will be accommodated

after Pele beats Francis," Warren said.

Reid came to boxing at the age of 23 by way of kick boxing. His father, who named his first son Santos, wanted his second to take up football, but, despite his Christian name, Pele Reid was more impressed by the exploits of Jackie Chan and Bruce Lee than the great Brazilian and took up martial arts at the age of 11. "The kids I ran with in Aston were a hard lot and there was a chance I would get into trouble. That is why I chose another route and I'm proud of what I've achieved so far. I

want to set a good example."

By 18, he had lifted the kick boxing world championship, after winning the European crown with a second-round knockout. When he turned to professional boxing, he joined Brendan Ingle, because he liked the style of boxing that the Sheffield trainer had taught Clive Graham and Naseem Hamed.

Reid is unbeaten in 13 contests and all his victories have been inside the distance. Eight have ended in the first round and only one has gone beyond three. Ingle thinks Francis will go out in two.

Both Ingle and Warren believe that Reid has the qualities to go all the way. "He is named after a famous man and now I expect him to make a name in his own right," Warren said. "He should be among the top ten in 18 months. Right now, he'd beat any American at his level."

Ingle agreed. "If he hits you, he knows you got," he said. "He is so strong, you have to nail him to the floor to beat him."

If Reid lives up to expectations, his quick victories added to a natural charm and positive outlook should make him ideal for marketing when he reaches the top level.

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL

SWISSER LEAGUE: Manchester 120, Worthing Bears 81; Thames Valley Tigers 89, London Towers 81.

BOWLS

HUTTON-CHAMBERLAIN, Norfolk: World indoor championships. Singles: Third

SNOW REPORTS

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Notes
London	20-28	SW	Partly	Clear
Edinburgh	40-180	Good	Partly	Clear
South	20-70	Good	Partly	Clear
St. Anton	30-255	Good	Partly	Clear
Chamonix	100-139	Good	Partly	Clear
Lake Louise	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
France	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Alpe d'Huez	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Appenzel	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
La Clusaz	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
La Plagne	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Les Arcs	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Megeve	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Meribel	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Tignes	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Val Thorens	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Val d'Isere	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Vermorel	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Italy	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Corviglia	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Corviglia	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Ergho	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Megeve	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Switzerland	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Chamonix	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Davos	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Nogent	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Saint Felix	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
St. Moritz	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Verbier	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Valais	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
United States	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Alpine	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear
Deer Valley	50-150	Good	Partly	Clear

CYCLING

round: 5 (Pele) (Wales) vs 1 (Newman) (Eng) 7-2, 7-0, 7-1, 7-1.

FOOTBALL

Wednesday's late results

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Second division

1st: East Fife 1, East Fife 1.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: First division

1st: Dundee 1, Dundee 1.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier division

1st: Dundee 1, Dundee 1.

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SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier division

1st: Dundee 1, Dundee 1.

FOOTBALL

2. Smith v. 11: 3, 3: 3, 3: 3, 3: 3.

FOOTBALL

Wednesday's late results

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Second division

1st: East Fife 1, East Fife 1.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: First division

1st: Dundee 1, Dundee 1.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier division

1st: Dundee 1, Dundee 1.

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SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By Robert Sheehan, Bridge Correspondent

Begin Bridge with The Times

Lesson 40 - More on Responding in a Suit

So far, all the responses in a suit to a one-level opening have been fairly straightforward. You have simply bid your longest suit at lowest level (and we have established what to do when you had "two longest suits").

Sometimes it is more complicated. Your first question should be: "Is my responding hand worth one or two bids?" With fewer than 11 HCP, game is unlikely and your hand is worth only one bid. If partner makes a minimum rebid, you want to close the contract below game level. With 11 or more HCP, even if partner makes a minimum rebid, you want to make a second response which invites him to consider a game contract.

Consider the following two hands after partner has opened One Heart:

(A) ♠ KJ73	(B) ♠ KJ73
♥ 87	♥ 87
♦ AJ63	♦ AJ63
♣ 764	♣ 654

On both hands you respond One Spade. But with Hand (A) if partner rebids Two Hearts you will pass; if he rebids Two Clubs you will give simple preference to Two Hearts (more on this later). You have a minimum response; he has shown no extra values; you will sign off. However, Hand (B) is stronger. Now you are worth a game invitation. If he rebids Two Hearts or Two Clubs you are worth Two No-Trumps. This shows similar values to an immediate Two No-Trump response but you showed your four-card spade suit first.

If your hand is worth only one bid then priority must be given to showing major suits.

Consider these hands after partner has opened One Heart:

(C) ♠ KJ43	(D) ♠ KJ43	(E) ♠ KJ43
♥ 87	♥ 87	♥ 87
♦ Q10785	♦ Q10785	♦ Q10785
♣ 76	♣ 76	♣ 65

Hand (C) does not have the 9 HCP necessary for a two-level response, so you must respond One Spade. Although Hand (D) has 9 HCP it doesn't have the 11 necessary to intend to make two bids, so again start with the major suit. Respond One Spade. However, with Hand (E) you have enough to invite game facing a minimum rebid from partner. So bid your longest suit first. Respond Two Diamonds, intending to bid Two Spades if partner rebids Two Hearts.

Geir Helgemo and Tor Helness of Norway continue to dominate the 1999 MacCallan international pairs, being played at the White House Hotel, Regent's Park, London. They have led from the start of the tournament. Scores after seven rounds: 1. Helgemo and Helness 290 VPs; 2. Chernia and Levy (France) 25 VPs; 3. equal, Aulken and von Arnim (Germany) 254 VPs and Lauria and Versace (Italy); 5. Chagas and Weinstein (Brazil/US) 252 VPs.

SNOOKER

NEWCASTLE: Nations Cup: Wales 5 Northern Ireland 5.

RUGBY UNION

Welsh Challenge Trophy

Pont A: Neath v. Edinburgh Hebrides (7.0).

Pont B: Llanelli v. Glasgow Caledonians (7.0).

RUGBY LEAGUE

Club match

Salford v. Batavia (8.0).

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Bundesliga League: 1st: Bayern Muenchen v. Borussia Dortmund (7.30); Sheffield Sharks v. Edinburgh Rocks (7.45).

HOCKEY: World cities women's indoor tournament (at Boff's SC, Perth, 8.0); Sydney v. Toronto, Perth v. Glasgow.

KEENE on CHESS

By Raymond Keene, Chess Correspondent

Kasparov brilliance

In the fourth round of the elite tournament at Wijk aan Zee in Holland, the world's top two ranked players, Garry Kasparov and Viswanathan Anand, both continued their winning ways. They still share the lead with 3½/4. However, it was Kasparov's win against Veselin Topalov, the Bulgarian grandmaster, which seized the attention of spectators and experts alike. In a brilliant sacrificial onslaught Kasparov sacrificed a rook to smoke out his opponent's king and hunt it across the board to its doom. What distinguished this combination were a number of piquant moments where Kasparov played quiet, non-forcing moves in his victory march, despite being a huge amount of material in arrears.

White: Garry Kasparov Black: Veselin Topalov Wijk aan Zee 1999

Fire Dence

1 ♠	2 ♠	3 ♠	4 ♠	5 ♠	6 ♠	7 ♠	8 ♠	9 ♠	10 ♠	11 ♠	12 ♠	13 ♠	14 ♠	15 ♠	16 ♠	17 ♠	18 ♠	19 ♠	20 ♠	21 ♠	22 ♠	23 ♠	24 ♠
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Diagram of final position

8 ♠ 7 ♠ 6 ♠ 5 ♠ 4 ♠ 3 ♠ 2 ♠ 1 ♠

a b c d e f g h

Keene online

You can send me your queries, puzzles, problems and games direct by e-mail. The address is keenechess@aol.com. The best contributions from Times readers will be published either here or in the Saturday Times Weekend column.

Times book

The Times Winning Moves 2 contains 240 chess puzzles from international grandmaster Raymond Keene's daily column in The Times, and is available now from bookshops or from B.T. Baisford Ltd (tel:

FOOTBALL

West heading in direction of Newcastle

By GEORGE CAULKIN and RICHARD HOBSON

NEWCASTLE United directors were understood to have persuaded Taribo West of the merits of a permanent transfer to Tyneside last night after agreeing a £4.2 million fee with Internazionale for the Nigeria defender.

West had previously stated his preference for a loan arrangement after falling foul of Mircea Lucescu, the Serie A club's Romanian coach. Having finally contacted West, who is preparing for Nigeria's African Nations Cup qualifying match with Burundi on Saturday, United were confident enough of a positive outcome to reserve a room in a Newcastle hotel for the Lagos-born centre half. A medical team has also been put on standby, although West's international commitments will delay his arrival.

West, who won the UEFA Cup with Internazionale last season, has not started a league match for almost seven weeks, saying that Lucescu has "put me in the shadows". Newcastle were first alerted of his availability last month when Michel Basilevich, his



West available

adviser, travelled to England to talk to interested parties. Ironically, Liverpool's interest in West has cooled only because their manager, Gérard Houllier, is confident of signing Steve Howey, of Newcastle, under freedom of contract this summer.

Middlesbrough's decision to dispense with the services of Marco Branca has met with a querulous response from the Italian centre forward, who claims to know nothing about his supposed retirement as a

result of a serious knee injury. The FA Carling Premiership club issued a statement on Wednesday, saying that it had "reluctantly" accepted medical advice that a knee injury sustained by Branca last April had brought a premature end to his career.

Branca, 34, said yesterday: "I don't know why the club is saying this. I'm doing rehabilitation work in Milan, but I'll be up in Middlesbrough in a few weeks to talk to the club." Wolverhampton Wanderers, of the Nationwide League first division, have appealed to the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) to release Robbie Keane from the world youth championships in April. The FAI have so far failed to respond to a request by Wolves to ignore Keane for the under-20 competition in Nigeria.

Steve Bull, the club's record goalscorer, will return to light training next week after initial fears that a knee injury would bring his career to a close. Moussa Saïd could be on his way out of White Hart Lane after defying George Graham, the Tottenham Hotspur manager, and flying to join the Algeria squad for their game against Tunisia on Sunday. Graham will contact the Football Association for guidance on dealing with Saïd's "disappearing" act after saying: "He has shown a lack of respect to the club and the fans and, without question, he'll be seriously disciplined."

The agent of Marko Viduka has claimed that the Celtic forward is "sick and tired" of the club's hard line over his return to Parkhead and will consider legal action to resolve the ongoing dispute over his £3 million transfer from Croatia Zagreb. Viduka is desperate to resume his playing career after recuperating from the emotional stress that he insisted lay behind his walkout after just one training session in Glasgow.

However, Celtic's continued insistence on him receiving his hefty signing-on fee — believed to be as much as £1.5 million — in instalments while he proves his long-term commitment to the club has left Viduka exasperated.



Hollins, left, and Curtis have revived a club that had been in turmoil for years until they came together six months ago.

Reborn Swansea take wing

John Hollins, Swansea City manager, house in Chelsea, jokes that it costs him £4.20 every time he wants to get back into Wales, such is the expense of crossing the Severn Bridge, but that he would be happy to pay a fiver if it meant heading Derby County at home in the FA Cup tomorrow. Either way, this is small money compared with the £370,000 it took to pack Alan Curtis off out of Wales 20 years ago.

Curtis departed Swansea for Leeds United in 1979 as the club's record transfer sale and the League's joint-top scorer from the previous season, but he stayed at Elland Road for only 18 months. Before leaving the Vetch Field, Curtis had helped Swansea from the lower end of the fourth division into the second.

While Curtis was away, Swansea stayed put. Within six months of his return, bought for half the fee that he was sold for after flopping at Leeds, the Swans were in the first division. The following season, managed by John Toshack, they led the league for a while and remained in contention for the championship until April.

A string of defeats towards the end saw Swansea finish in sixth place, but still the

David Powell on the men bringing back the glory days to Vetch Field

club's highest League finish. Now, as the fourth-round tie with Derby approaches, Curtis, in his fourth spell with Swansea — three as a player, now as assistant manager — says that these are the best days at the Vetch since the two-season stay in the top division.

"The hairs on the back of your neck stand up and you get a tingling sensation," Curtis said. "The last time we had that was when the club was in the old first division." Since then, keeping count of the managers has kept busy the fingers of fans who remember using them to tally Curtis's goals (32 in the 1977-78 season).

Swansea have had 12 changes of manager in 15 years, three parting company with the club in an eight-month spell prior to the arrival of Hollins last July. Two incumbents in the past three years, Kevin Collis and Mickey Adams, each survived less than a fortnight. Only 15

months ago, the club was in turmoil and Curtis could barely believe what was happening. "It was becoming a laughing stock," bordering on farce," Curtis recalled. "When Alan Cork took over, I was doing the youth team and the first team. There was nobody else left. When Cork went last summer, Hollins was installed, unperturbed at Swansea's reputation, glad to be a manager again, ten years after he had last held such a post."

For three years until 1988, Hollins managed Chelsea. Though he still has a home there, to which he returns once a week, he spends most nights at his flat in Swansea. Hollins insists that he had not thought of packing in almost as soon as he had arrived as, after six matches, Swansea were one place off the bottom. Now, halfway up the table and after eliminating Millwall, Stoke City and West Ham United from the FA

Cup, Hollins is no dying Swan. "I came here because this was an opportunity for me to use the experience I had from playing, coaching and managing — some good experiences, some bitter ones," Hollins said. "What I have learnt is how a club should be run and how a club should not be run. We have put that into practice, but we have only just started."

"Alan and I have been together for six months. I have not bought, loaned or sold anybody. We are just trying to get our experience into them and make them play. It was a sad place when I arrived, but not now."

Until decamping to Swansea, Hollins had spent all his football life with clubs in London. With Chelsea, he played in two FA Cup finals, the first in 1967, against Tottenham Hotspur, when Curtis was at school in South Wales. "In those days, you were either a Spurs, Manchester United or Chelsea supporter," Curtis recalled, noting that he had gone with Spurs because "I was a Jimmy Greaves man".

Not a Hollins man? Not then. It took Curtis 21 years to come round to the idea, but now they are a team. Swansea are on the rise again. Derby beware.



Swansea's reputation, glad to be a manager again, ten years after he had last held such a post. For three years until 1988, Hollins managed Chelsea. Though he still has a home there, to which he returns once a week, he spends most nights at his flat in Swansea. Hollins insists that he had not thought of packing in almost as soon as he had arrived as, after six matches, Swansea were one place off the bottom. Now, halfway up the table and after eliminating Millwall, Stoke City and West Ham United from the FA

Lombardo adds to Palace abdications

ATTILIO LOMBARDO, the Crystal Palace midfielder player, is expected to complete a move to Lazio today for a fee of about £500,000 (Russell Kempson writes). The former Juventus and Sampdoria player flew to Rome for discussions with Lazio officials yesterday.

Lombardo's move is the latest in a series of departures from Selhurst Park as Mark Goldberg, the Palace chairman, attempts to cut costs at the Nationwide League first division club. Marcus Ben has joined Port Vale for £375,000 and Matt Jansen was bought by Blackburn Rovers for £4.1 million on Monday.

"Attilio served us well," Goldberg said. "We're sorry he is leaving, but it is the same situation as it was with Matt."

If we are not going to be in the Premiership next season, then it was going to be very difficult to keep Attilio."

Goldberg indicated that he was looking to trim further the first-team squad. "We've got 40 players and should really have only 22 or 23," he said. "We've got to provide opportunities for the youngsters and make sure we're running an efficient organisation."

"I'm acting not under crisis management, but purely good business management. I've learnt a lot here and I thought that throwing money at the equation was the right way to go. Now, we might have to take one step backward to move two steps forward."

Lombardo, 33, the former Italy international, joined Palace from Juventus for £1.6 million in August 1997.

RUGBY UNION

England put the case for leniency

By MARK SOUSTER

ENGLAND will discover next week what penalty, if any, the International Rugby Board (IRB) intends to impose in its latest sparring match with Twickenham. Having been found guilty last week of "conduct prejudicial to the interests of the board", the Rugby Football Union (RFU) met yesterday's deadline by submitting its defence and plea for leniency.

The IRB had taken its action because, it said, the union had reneged on the commitment to support the board in its stance against England's leading clubs, who, in a legal submission to the European Commission in April, challenged its authority and control over certain areas of the game. In essence, the union's lawyers argued yesterday that Twickenham did not have a case to answer and that its behaviour, while perhaps regrettable, had not damaged the board and therefore no fine or other punishment was warranted. The board disciplinary committee has indicated already that it will not suspend England from the World Cup, but the prospect of a heavy fine remains.

The English clubs want to be able to negotiate their own commercial agreements for competitions in which they participate and they maintain that the board's control amounts to restrictive practice. In a separate case last month, the board withheld a £60,000 grant to the union for failing

to prevent the unofficial cross-border Anglo-Welsh friendly matches.

Richmond are to appeal against the dismissal of Robbie Hutton, a flank forward, during the Allied Dunbar Premiership game away to Gloucester. Hutton was sent off in the final minutes of the match for allegedly stamping, but, having studied a video recording, the club says that it will defend Hutton at a disciplinary hearing.

Gloucester Spartans opted yesterday not to appeal against a decision to ban its entire first team after a brawl during a league match against Cinderford. Thirteen players have been suspended for a fortnight, starting on Monday, while two others, Bobby Fowke and Stuart Brazil, were banned for 35 days after being sent off during the game, which was abandoned five minutes before half-time by the referee. Cinderford were exonerated of any blame.

Malcolm Pearce, the millionaire owner of Bristol, agreed yesterday that the protracted nature of merger talks with London Scottish was harming the game, but insisted that the action was necessary to safeguard Bristol's future. Pearce said that without a guarantee of promotion to the top division of whatever structure is in place next season, he has had to take his controversial action.

Ireland's summer tour to Australia has been reduced from six to four matches because the Irish RFU could not guarantee the availability of its strongest side for the full tour.

Three of England's Five Nations Championship matches this season will be controlled by referees from the southern hemisphere. Only their first match, against Scotland, will have a European in charge — David McHugh, of Ireland.

Ed Morrison, the leading English referee, will be in action on the championship's opening weekend, on February 6, when he takes charge of Scotland against Wales at Murrayfield.



Morrison: Murrayfield date

Greed supplants dignity in soul of the Five Nations

Evoking an image so redolent of the past merely reinforced the regret for the way things were and how they have so uncomfortably changed. Allan Hossie, Brian Baister and Bill Beaumont stood with pints of warm beer in their hands and declared that the Five Nations Championship, in its traditional form, had not disappeared after all. England were no longer the pariahs of Europe.

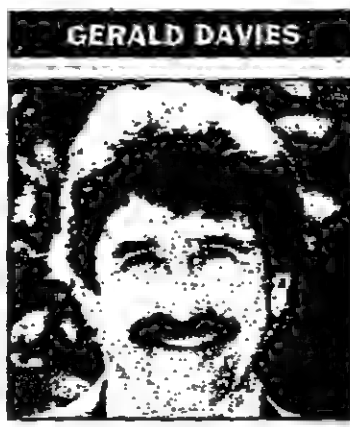
The thin smiles in the photograph of the chairman of the Five Nations Committee (Hossie) with the Rugby Football Union chairman (Baister) and negotiator (Beaumont) seemed to suggest that no problem is so great that it cannot be settled with a pie and a pint at the Drum and Monkey. England were reinstated, with one or two provisos, as full members.

This is the second time that the Five Nations Championship has been put at risk. In July 1996, there was a stinking feeling of disbelief when a similar expulsion took place, which was followed by joy and relief when an agreement was reached and the championship was back on course. The events of this past week have simply been firestorm and irritation.

Who are we meant to believe? Did any meetings take place or didn't they? If not, why not? How is it that men who are appointed as administrators cannot arrange times and dates that are mutually convenient for meetings? How is it that, after some kind of protracted discussions, a decision is reached one day, only, after a sudden dash to Glasgow, for it to be overturned 24 hours later? Are not the participating parties bringing the game into disrepute?

As ever, money is at the root of the problem. Chasing the almighty dollar has been compounded by the fact that the rugby authorities, aware of the immense popularity of international rugby, have been unable to put a price on the value of their property, the tournament involving England, France, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. They all knew that the game was valuable to television, but how valuable? Fuelled by panic, greed was in the air in 1996, as it is now.

This was why a Five Nations Committee was instituted, to co-ordinate the efforts of all countries concerned so that they could all benefit. Because their television contract is out



Rugby Union Commentary

of killer with the others. France could not immediately be a party to the negotiations, but had committed themselves firmly to the principle. England believed that, because of their higher percentage share of the potential television audience, they had a claim on the greater share of the money. They decided to pursue their own individual contract for all matches at Twickenham.

They may have had a good case, except that the property for sale was the Five Nations Championship in its entirety, not bits of it. Each country is dependent on the others: there is a mutuality of interest.

The argument goes that the championship cannot do without England. This is true — but the championship cannot exist without the others either. Take out any one country and the tournament is significantly less attractive.

For example, Wales are down on their luck at the moment, but we only need to go back a couple of decades to appreciate what their absence would have meant then. The tournament would have been substantially devalued.

The problem is that so many — from the players to the administrators at Twickenham — repeat endlessly the axiom that the championship cannot do without England, and believe it so intensely, that they are creating the impression that it is so. Critical though their presence is to the tournament, they are not. If push came to shove — as it clearly did this week — indispensable climatic not in the existing unstable climate.

What the union in England will also have come to understand is that it could be isolated. In July 1996, it may have thought that it had outgrown the championship and that competition against the southern hemisphere nations would approximate more to its standing in world rugby. The prospect was mooted that, with France, they could fashion an alternative Five Nations Championship to include the three nations of the southern hemisphere. After England's display last summer and the turmoil it is suffering in its relationship with the International Rugby Board, those three countries are no longer so enamoured of the idea.

Yet why, in any case, should a championship that is so unquestionably appealing be put in such jeopardy? The time may indeed come, though it is a long way off, when there is a sufficient number of countries playing rugby at the highest level that some may wish to pursue their independent whims and to determine their own destinies without the Five Nations Championship. Rugby may then need to consider another structure — but that moment has not arrived.

For the time being, it is in rugby's best interests to act collectively in order to broaden the game globally. This will not occur if countries choose to act selfishly.

By then, any sense that decisions may be determined in bar-room conviviality will be long gone. At the moment, with so much acrimony born of past grievances, one can only wish things to be as they once were. At least such hotnoddling chumminess ensured that common sense and honour prevailed. Then, the game was harmonious and had a deep sense of its own dignity.

“Take out any one country and the tournament is significantly less attractive”

BOWLS

Players benefit as seeds fall

By DAVID RHYNS JONES

THE failure of the top-ranked players in the world indoor singles championship at Porters Leisure Resort in Norfolk has delighted those who have campaigned for making the sports televised events more accessible.

The top 16 players on the World Bowls Tour ranking list were seeded through to the second round, but only six survived their opening matches. Mervyn King, the No 4 seed, from Norfolk, who was beaten by Alex Marshall, an unseeded Scot, on Sunday, admitted that there is very little to choose between those in the top 16 and the rest.

"We were just lucky to be in the right place at the right time to earn the points that have put us in pole position, but there are lots of good bowlers around and I'm not at all surprised by what's been happening," he said.

Yet there is another factor. This year, because the field has been increased to 48, the

seeds, in their opening games, came up against opponents who had not only already played a match on the portable rink, but whose confidence was boosted by their first-round successes. John Price, the No 5 seed, who was beaten by Mark McMahon on Tuesday, claimed some credit on behalf of the Professional Bowls Association (PBA), of which he is chairman.

"The PBA has been campaigning for more qualifying events and for competition who are just out of the top 16 to have their chance," he said yesterday. "As a result of the expansion of the field, it's a much stronger event and the eclipse of the seeds was quite predictable."

Even though Steve Rees, the No 7 seed, 38, from Swansea, defeated Robert Newman, the British champion, on Wednesday night, the average age of the competitors left in the tournament remains below 30.

NETBALL

Essex suffer setback

ESSEX Met's hopes of retaining their English Counties League championship have been dealt a blow after they failed in their bid to rearrange their final match against Middlesex, the leaders, which is scheduled for April 10 (Cathy Harris writes).

The champions will be missing Amanda Newton, their Commonwealth Games bronze medal-winning goalkeeper, who will be playing for a New Zealand club in March and April.

Despite being offered several dates by Essex Met, Middlesex, who will be without Helen Lonsdale, another player to

accept an offer to play in New Zealand, have struggled to reach a suitable alternative.

Pat Meadows, the Essex Met coach, said: "Initially, I was a bit peeved, but now I've got used to the idea. We're simply going to have to work our socks off."

Although the All England Netball Association had agreed for two matches between the leading contenders to be rearranged, Derbyshire's match against Bedfordshire will also go ahead as scheduled, despite Derbyshire being without Naomi Siddall and Olivia Murphy, both of whom will be in New Zealand.

OLYMPICS

British official accuses Salt Lake

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

A LEADING British Olympic official claimed yesterday that Salt Lake City should lose its right to stage the 2002 Winter Games, but admitted it was not practical.

Simon Clegg, the chief executive of the British Olympic Association, said that unless there were drastic changes to the bidding process, the Olympic movement would lose any credibility it still retained.

He claimed that members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) behaved in an improper manner during their visits to Great Britain during Manchester's bid for the 1996 and 2000 Games, but a lack of evidence prevented an inquiry from being launched.

His revelations followed more damaging allegations surrounding the Salt Lake City bid, with one member of the bidding team claiming that a suitcase containing \$5,000 (£3,000) was carried to wine and dine members of the IOC.

Pirjo Haggman, of Finland, has already resigned her seat on the IOC ahead of the official inquiry into the Salt Lake City bid and a further 12 members are set to follow when the findings are published next week, Clegg said. "In a perfect world, Salt Lake City wouldn't be allowed to host the 2002 Games, but the practicalities mean that finding an alternative at such short notice would be almost impossible."

He said that suspicion had not been pointed at the three recent British bids — Birmingham (1992) and Manchester (1996 and 2000) — but added: "There were certain allegations made about IOC members while they were in Manchester. The complaints were forwarded to the IOC, but were hard to substantiate."

Junichi Yamaguchi, a senior official in the Nagano team that bid successfully for the 1998 Winter Olympics, claimed yesterday that records concerning his bid were destroyed after IOC members asked that they be kept secret. He said \$14 million (£8.5 million) was spent on entertaining 62 IOC officials, but added: "We were concerned that if the documents were made public, it could cause unpleasantness for the IOC."

GOLF: FORMER ENGLISH AMATEUR CHAMPION AMONG LEADERS AFTER FIRST DAY OF SOUTH AFRICAN OPEN

Garbutt makes most of early start



Els, of South Africa, watched by a packed gallery, tees off during his round at Stellenbosch yesterday. He started promisingly, but finished the day four shots behind the leaders.

THERE are days at a golf tournament when the leaders are determined not to much by one player's edge over another as by other factors. The day of the first round of the South African Open was one such. The weather made a big difference. Those who started early played in calm conditions, but those who played later faced a gusty wind and intense heat as the temperature rose to nearly 40C.

Furthermore, in the sharp light that is a feature of this part of the Cape, 20 miles east of Cape Town, it is harder to read the lines on the greens when the sun is directly overhead than when it is lower in the sky. Putting was harder, therefore, for the later starters. Ronnie McCann, who was born in South Africa but left for the United States when he was 13, Ian Garbutt, the former English amateur

champion, who has not had a distinguished career as a professional, and Sven Straver, the German World Cup player, are the leaders after recording rounds of 67. All three started their first rounds between 6.30am and 7.20am and were back in the clubhouse before midday. It could be more difficult for them today, when they tee off between 11.30am and noon.

Garbutt, whose best finish in a European tour event was seventh in the Dutch Open last year, went to bed at 9pm on Wednesday, woke seven hours later and was on the first tee at 6.50am. He played steadily, birdieing three of his first four holes before three-putting from 70ft on the 6th. Coming home was harder and he added only two more birdies.

Garbutt finished only 38th in the Alfred Dunhill SA PGA

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT IN STELLENBOSCH

Championship at Houghton golf club in Johannesburg last Sunday, but he was suffering from a stomach upset there and he seemed to be a different player on this occasion. His putting, in particular, had improved. "It can really blow here," Garbutt said. "We were lucky to have the best of the weather."

Nick Faldo also started early, at 7.10am, and was furious with himself by the time that he had finished because he felt he had failed to capitalise on the good conditions. There is no pleasing some people. Faldo's 70, one under par, was seven strokes better than his opening round in Johannesburg and contained only three bog-

gies. When was the last time he outscored Ernie Els? "It was a piece of cake," Faldo said. "There is nothing going on out there. The greens are holding. It's there for the taking. Far is 68 max right now. Ernie Els will make mincemeat of it."

Els set off at 11.50am, just after Faldo had finished. For his first seven holes, he looked as though he might, indeed, do as Faldo had suggested, holding putts of 30ft on the 5th and 25th on the 6th. However, the 8th drove into the left rough, took three to reach the green and then missed a six-footer for par. After that, he went off the boil, coming home in 37, one over par, and failed to get his par at the 18th.

Peter Baker was another who experienced a thoroughly frustrating day. "Some days, a 72 is a really great score," Bak-

er, who was playing a couple of groups ahead of Els, said. Again and again, he saved himself with his magical short game. Four times on his home-ward half alone, he rescued his par. He described his round as a battle.

Paul McGinley, who started at 12.20pm, ten minutes ahead of Anthony Wall, went round in 69, which was notable because he was one of very few to score well so late in the day and because he had a hole in one on the 7th. Wall's scores for the 12th, 13th and 14th were 6, 1, 5 — against a par of 5, 3, 5.

"It was a different course this afternoon," Els said. "You never know in the Cape. It might rain tomorrow."

That is not very likely. The forecast is for more scorching heat, with temperatures reaching 40C. The day could again belong to those who have an early start.

SCORES FROM STELLENBOSCH

LEADING FIRST-ROUND SCORES (South Africa unless stated): 67: R McCann (US), I Garbutt (Eng), S Straver (Ger), 68: A Clegg (Ger), J Kingston (Eng), D Frost, S Pappas, M Moutland (Wales), R Kaplan, H Alberts, I Palmer, A Rossouw, D Faure, P McGinley (Eng), 70: C Kampas, N Faldo (Eng), P Loftholm (Aus), J Horday, R May (US), S Loney (Aus), B Vaughan, C Whitelaw, I Garcia (Sp), M Gertens, C Halline (US), 71: E Els, M A Martin (Sp), D Botes, P Sjodan (Swe), S Allan (Aus), R Gonzalez (Arg), P Blake, M McNulty (Zim), W Coetzee, A Pitts (US), S Tilling (Den), R Westwood, J Singh (Ind), P Nyman (Swe), J Boleman (Eng), M Roe (Eng), G Owen (US), B Pappas, I Hutchings, S Daniels, D Gorman, R Whitaker (US), B Fouches, H Thul (Ger). Other scores: 72: B Langer (Ger), I Woodman (Wales), 1 Bogt (Den), S Hansen (Den), A Cusack (Swe), Broadhurst (Eng), 73: A Wall (Eng), 78: P J Johansson (Swe).

CRICKET: WORLD CHAMPIONS FINALLY OFF THE MARK WITH THRILLING VICTORY IN TRIANGULAR ONE-DAY COMPETITION

Sri Lankans grow weary of debate over Muralitharan

By MICHAEL HENDERSON

AS ENGLAND'S cricketers enjoyed a rare day off yesterday, their opponents in the triangular one-day tournament were trying to patch up problems of their own. The Australians, resting from the shock of Ricky Ponting's exclusion from the side after his involvement in a nightclub brawl, have lost Steve Waugh to a pulled hamstring, while Sri Lanka resent the treatment of Muttiah Muralitharan, their star off-spinner.

Waugh, the captain of the Australia one-day team, carried his injury into the tournament and missed the first three games, when Shane Warne led the side. In Hobart, where Sri Lanka won the latest game by three wickets, to gain their first victory, Waugh again took over the captaincy after Waugh withdrew.

With Ponting in the doghouse and Michael Bevan nursing a groin strain, they have summoned Stuart Law, the Queensland and Essex batsman, and Michael Kasprovic, the team bowler, for the game against England at the Adelaide Oval next Tuesday, Australia Day. Kasprovic

replaces Bradley Young, the off-spinner, who has an ankle injury.

On Saturday Sri Lanka play England. The big question is whether Ross Emerson and Tony McQuillan, two of the umpires who called Muralitharan's bowling action "diabolical" in a recent book — has not banished this difficult subject. The whole of Australia, or at least that part of it which takes an interest in cricket, is talking about it.

Darrell Hair's decision to stand himself down from the umpires' panel for this tournament — and his imminent disrepute charge, brought against him for calling Muralitharan's bowling action "diabolical" in a recent book — has not banished this difficult subject. The whole of Australia, or at least that part of it which takes an interest in cricket, is talking about it.

The whispering has not stopped since the Sri Lankans arrived in this country. Some umpires are believed to side with Hair, so it would be something short of a sensation, though still an extraordinary event, if Muralitharan were called on Saturday. Peter van der Merwe, the match referee, will have to mention his abnormal action in his report at the end of the tournament and the International Cricket Council will once again be presented with evidence requiring some form of judgment.

Muralitharan is thoroughly fed up with the whole business. As soon as he came on to bowl in the first match in Brisbane, spectators called "no ball" and the jeering has not stopped. Arjuna Ranatunga, the captain, feels that his bowler may not want to tour Australia again.

"It's so unfortunate that a brilliant bowler who has taken 200 wickets, every time he goes into the field he has this problem," Ranatunga said. "Ultimately, what will happen is that people like Murali will never tour Australia. The younger generation will never



Jayasuriya and Mahanama celebrate after they had combined to end the innings of Mark Waugh for 65

be able to see him bowling. What if we do the same thing when some brilliant cricketer comes to Colombo — if he was hoisted from the day he started bowling? It's not the right thing for a sportsman. Why is it only happening here? I'm really disappointed with the public this time.

"When we came last time, the public backed us and the media backed us. This time, it

is different. I don't know what it is or where it comes from. Something is wrong somewhere. Murali has played for eight years and only once had a problem. That was here. If someone is having a problem, then the first thing they have to do is come to the captain and the manager. No one has spoken to me about it anywhere. No one has spoken to the manager."

HOCKEY

Southgate face trial of strength

By SYDNEY FRISKIN

SOUTHGATE will entertain Hounslow, their traditional rivals, when the National League restarts on Sunday after the winter break. The clubs meet again at the same venue in the sixth round of the English Hockey Association (EHA) Men's Cup on February 28.

Hounslow, third from the bottom in the premier division, face a daunting task, but their opponents, holding third position, will have to draw heavily on reserve strength with Giles, Livesey, Sully and Simons all unfit, although Simons is expected to be on the bench. At centre half, Max Diamond, the Australia international, will be a source of inspiration to the three front-runners, Eiko Roti, Duncan Woods and Danny Kerry.

Canterbury, the league leaders, and Beeston meet for the first time this season at the Polo Farm, where Sean Kerly, the player-manager, and David Mathews will again be out of action. "Beeston are a tenacious team and we are wary of them," Kerly said. He made particular reference to Craig Keegan, the Beeston midfielder player, who has scored 14 goals in ten matches.

Canoe, in second place, are at full strength, with the recovery of Kalbir Takher from injury, against Guildford, who field Mark Hoskin, from Reading, and Richard Arscott, from Hampstead. Their new signings, Victory in a triangular tournament at Havant has boosted their confidence.

Reading play their postponed EHA Cup fifth-round tie tomorrow at home against Loughborough Students, for which Simon Masoo, their goalkeeper, is unavailable, but he will join them for the trip to Bourneville on Sunday for a league match. Brooklands, at the bottom of the table, need a win away to East Grinstead to have any chance of survival.

Slough set sights on triple goal

By CATHY HARRIS

SLOUGH have spent several weeks tinkering with line-ups and tactics, but the serious stuff begins tomorrow, when the English indoor club champions meet Paris in their opening game of the inaugural Perth world cities championship at the Bell's Sports Centre.

It is the start of a busy month for Slough, who have made no secret of their desire to win a medal in Perth, retain their domestic title at Crystal Palace next week and end the Germans' domination of the European club championship in Glasgow in February.

Andy Halliday, the new Slough coach this season, has enjoyed his association with such a talented group of players. He will also be keeping his fingers crossed that Sue Knight, the first-choice goalkeeper, does not suffer any injuries after Lynette Smith, the reserve goalkeeper, was forced to pull out of the competition for financial reasons.

Facing the prospect of six games in two days, Halliday believes that the event will give his squad an excellent indication of what progress they have made. "It will be a measure of where we are, as well as being a good dress rehearsal for next week," he said. "I'm very happy with the defensive side of our game, but we need to make better use of our possession and try to be more incisive."

England Under-21, representing Manchester in the tournament, are using it to prepare for the European Nations Cup in Prague next week, but with students making up the majority of the side, Pete Nicholson, the coach, has found it difficult to juggle practices with exam schedules. He said: "At least we'll be able to benefit from some good competition and give all the players pitch time without worrying too much about results."

TEAMS: Slough (representing London), England Under-21 (Manchester), Glasgow, Western Glasgow, Scotland (Glasgow), France Under-21 (Paris), Canada (Toronto), Australia (Sydney).

Rain puts A tour on hold

ENGLAND A were forced to abandon their scheduled four-day match against Mashonaland and hope instead that the rain eases sufficiently to play two limited-overs matches against the province today and tomorrow.

For the second day running, the players arrived at the Old Hararians ground in the morning only to find that the bowlers' run-ups and parts of the square were too wet to risk playing on. Protective covers had leaked on the first day and efforts to find an alternative venue failed once it had become clear that most other grounds in Harare were suffering similar problems.

FROM THERASY PETROPOULOS IN HARARE

Hopes are high that the one-day matches will go ahead, but there are questions being asked about the suitability of touring here during the rainy season, although few could have predicted the 44in that have fallen since mid-November. The yearly average is about 35in.

Phil Neale, the tour manager, said: "There is a reasonable chance that it will rain here at this time of year. I was not involved with why it was decided to come at this time. There were fingers crossed that it wasn't going to rain,

but everybody is saying that this is exceptional."

However, there was a time when the very idea of an A tour this winter was doubtful. Initially, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) had looked at visiting South Africa with a shorter, final leg in Zimbabwe. With South Africa unable to host the requested tour, Zimbabwe were quick to seize the opportunity.

Short of cricket, the players have not been slow in seeking alternative entertainment. Nevertheless, they will be hoping that the golf, go-karting, Laser Wars and such like will be substituted by cricket today.

India omit opener Sidhu

By RICHARD HOBSON

INDIA will begin the first home series against Pakistan for 12 years with a new opening partnership after dropping Navjot Sidhu and Ajay Jadeja from the side that lost to New Zealand last month. If the omission of Jadeja, the former vice-captain, from the 14-man squad announced yesterday was expected, that of Sidhu was a considerable surprise.

In 51 Test matches stretching back to 1983, Sidhu has scored 3,202 runs at an average of 42.13. A barren series against New Zealand, in which he totalled just 48 runs from four innings, was his first failure for some time. He still averages almost 50 over the past two

years, but, at 35, he may find that his career at the highest level is over as the selectors bring in younger players.

The likelihood is that Nayan Mongia, the wicketkeeper, will move up the order to open with Sadagopan Ramesh, a new cap, in the first of the two-match Test series, which will begin amid high security in Madras next Thursday. Laxmi Ratan Shukla, an all-rounder, could be another to play his first game.

Pakistan arrived in Delhi yesterday as members of Shiv Sena, a militant Hindu organisation, called off plans to dis-

rupt the tour after a meeting with officials of the India Government. It says much for the importance of the weeks ahead that the Pakistan team is being managed by Shahryar Khan, a former foreign secretary.

Vic Brown, resigned as chairman of Derbyshire yesterday after failing to find a solution to the continuing dispute between Dominic Cork, the captain, who is intent on leaving the County Ground, and Harold Rhodes, a committee member.

INDIA SQUAD: Mohammad Ashrauddin (captain), Sourav Ganguly, Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, VVS Laxman, Mayank Agarwal, Anil Kumble, Javahar Srinath, Venkatesh Prasad, Harbhajan Singh, Sunil Joshi, Saikat Banerjee, Mushtaq Khan, Laxmi Ratan Shukla.

lidity. This genial electrician had surgery to reduce the size of his stomach. He died six days after the operation. His wife agreed that the material could be used, perhaps as a poor tribute. As the end of the night, the programme was "wasn't the sort of material I would want."

Dispatches (Channel 4) went to Kosovo. It had permission to accompany an independent team led by a Finnish forensic expert. Professor Helena Ranta, investigating two small massacres. One was allegedly carried out by Serbs on Albanians, the other vice versa.

The programme was superseded by the discovery of the atrocity at Racak, and the commentary had to be amended at the last minute. It is extremely timely.

Helena Ranta was asked to return to investigate Racak, and the programme illustrates the shameless cunning and sheer persistence of the official obstruction it will face.

CHANNEL

00am 5 News and Sport Headlines (7800193)

01.00 **WideWorld Magazine** Phinix explores world of science (P) (7905396)

01.30 **Milkshake!** (A457759)

01.35 **Wimzie's House** (P) (9432029)

02.00 **Havakazoo** (P) (7957000)

02.30 **Dappledawn Farm** (P) (7950771)

03.00 **Minding It** (P) (7828551)

03.30 **The Oprah Winfrey Show** (6229445)

04.00 **Sunset Beach** (P) (6236193)

04.10 **Lezard** (P) (6271309)

04.30 **Family Affairs** Dave attempts to explain himself to Cat (P) (7890687)

05.00 **The Bold and the Beautiful** Brooks furious with Ridge (P) (7904657)

05.30 **The Roseanne Show** (9654807)

06.00 **100 Per Cent Cuz** (6056587)

06.30 **Good Afternoon** (4257551)

07.00 **Just Me and You** (TVM) (1978)

misinterpreted pair of fellow travellers to the States during a trip to California

Comedy, starring Charles Grodin. Directed by John Erman (9268342)

07.30 **Sunset Beach** Show earlier (P) (P) News Update (6717077)

08.00 **100 Per Cent Cuz** (6256395)

08.30 **Family Affairs** Dave and Annie make peace (P) (5917846)

09.00 **5 News** Weather (P) (6096903)

09.30 **Wild Flight** A story of the hummingbird that captured the imagination of a photographer captures the beautiful bird in flight (P) News Update (5905632)

10.00 **Was It Good for You?** Alisa Greenhalgh invites two gay friends, and a couple celebrating their silver wedding anniversary to comment on their lives (P) (791478581)

10.30 **Holiday Park** The police have had no time for late holidaymakers who have been a suspected peeping Tom, EastEnders Carol Hanson, who plays Tiffany's mom, visits the park for respite from the inns and imitations of Al Square (3/5) (P) (6056385)

11.00 **My 3 1/2 Girls** (P) (6056385)

11.30 **Becomes You** (TVM) (1996)

inquisitive woman investigates the behaviour of her former stepmother, refusing to believe the police's theory that the shocking crime was a random slaying. Mystery (P) (6056385)

Directed by Robert Beecroft. Directed by Corcoran (P) (5 News Update (6267755))

12.00 **Comedy Store Special** The stand-up comedy (2311950)

12.15 **Devotion** (1995) A troubled woman taken on an erotic journey through

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ATHLETICS 43

Running out of Africa towards a place in the England team

SPORT

FRIDAY JANUARY 22 1999

SNOOKER 46

Taking it to the maximum — and then throwing it all away



Hoddle happy with rising rate of interest

By Matt Dickinson

A NEW year and a new sponsor for the England team, but will 1999 offer a bright new start for Glenn Hoddle? The Nationwide Building Society will certainly hope so after staking £15 million on the fate of the England coach and the international team over the next four years.

Much as they talked earnestly about supporting the grass roots of the game yesterday, the building society's marketing men know that it is to the fluctuating fortunes of Hoddle and his team that they have tied their money and, more significantly, their reputation.

Still, they must be brave gambling men at heart, because they have ignored the recent scandals at the Football Association, which cost Graham Kelly and Keith Wiseman their jobs, England's recent European championship qualifying results and Hoddle's uneasy relationship with the media to stake their money on long-term success.

Those in the commercial department at Lancaster Gate can pat themselves on the back for securing almost four times the amount that Green Flag had paid for the same sponsorship privileges, but the new deal also poses one question. If this England team is valued at £15 million over four years, just how much more would a truly successful one be worth?

Perhaps Hoddle will find out in years to come, but first he must face five months that could be defining ones in his reign as England coach. The jury is still out on his credentials as he enters the last 18 months of his contract.

With just one victory from England's first three qualifying matches — and that against Luxembourg — games at home to Poland in March and Sweden in June, followed by Bulgaria away will be critical.

Hoddle announced yesterday that a match had also

been arranged in Hungary for April 28, but first will be France at Wembley on February 10, when a good result will be essential if Hoddle is to build on the positive vibes that were produced by a victory over the Czech Republic in England's last match.

The game against France is almost sold out and Hoddle believes that the rush for tickets is evidence of continued support for his methods from the country, rather than just a desire to see the world champions. "I am not sure there has been any dip in public



Hoddle: positive

confidence," he said yesterday. "And I think a sell-out shows that."

"We are delighted to be playing France and so is the country. That will be a hell of a game with a real edge to it because the result will be important as well as the performance. A good result then will give us a major lift, confidence-wise. They don't come any bigger than the world champions, so it couldn't be better."

It is qualification for the European championship that remains the target, though, and England's campaign has got off to a highly unconvincing start. "Two wins at Wembley

in the next two qualifiers would put a different complexion on the group," the England coach said yesterday. "It is not really a fresh start for us. That is the wrong attitude. We are bang in the middle of the season and the qualifiers and we are focused on what is ahead."

The Nationwide must be as confident as Hoddle, because its sponsorship deal is not dependent on England's success in qualifying for the European championship. In paying so much money, however, it is only reasonable that it might expect the England team's image to improve. It will hope the talk at Bisham Abbey press conferences is of football rather than World Cup diaries and faith healers.

The days of taking the money and running are long gone," Phil Carling, the FA's commercial director, said. "The image of the team and players is very, very important. The sponsors are sharing a bit of the cloak with the national team and we think they are buying into passion, excellence, professionalism and honesty."

The players will not be any richer for the deal. The FA's contribution to the players' pool was settled, after some wrangling, before the World Cup and they will not be receiving any additional cash for commercial appearances.

The FA was not the only organisation to benefit yesterday. The Football League's sponsorship deal with the Nationwide, which was due to expire in the summer, has been extended for another two years with a significant increase, to more than £4 million per year.

"Attendances have been rising every year that we have been involved with the Nationwide," Richard Scudamore, the League chief executive, said, "and they are up 4 per cent already this time. We will be building on that with them."

The Football Conference will also be sponsored by the Nationwide for the next two years. "We are supporting the game of football as a whole," Brian Davis, the chief executive, said. But it is the fortunes of the England team that matter most.

West Ham United are expected to spend the first of the riches from the sale of John Harrison next week when Marco Viviani arrives at Upton Park. The Cameroon midfielder is due in London on Monday for a medical and is expected to conclude a £4 million move. The 23-year-old was close to signing for Manchester United from Lens last season, but the deal was called off when he broke his leg. United have since made three significant signings and there was no indication yesterday that they would try to resurrect the transfer.

West heads north, page 44

RUSSIAN STARLET SUFFERS FROM DOUBLE VISION ON PAINFUL PATH TO THIRD ROUND



Faulty powers: Kournikova tries to get it right this time

Kournikova rues loss of normal service

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT IN MELBOURNE

SHE may look a million dollars, but you wouldn't give twice for her service...

The obsession with Anna Kournikova may have reached new heights at the Australian Open, the men of Melbourne melting at the feet of the Russian ice maiden, but one aspect of her play has plunged to near-zero.

For someone so clearly aware of the importance of shape in the spicy world of modern women's tennis, she is showing an alarming disdain for the small rectangle on the court into which her service should be dropping.

In her second-round match yesterday, the 18-year-old served up 31 double faults against Miho Saeki, of Japan, but somehow scrambled to victory 1-6, 6-4, 10-8. Added to the 26 that she produced in the first round, it took her aggre-

gate for the tournament to 57. Two matches in Sydney last week yielded 34 doubles and her tally for her past seven matches now stands at 147.

"It has been happening for a while, so I am kind of used to it," she said. "I'm really frustrated with it, just like everybody who is watching. In practice, I feel fine, I serve normal and there's no sign of double faults — it's just when I come to the line, when I play, there's something happening."

Kournikova should beware. A gaggle of teeny talent is clamouring for her crown, as witnessed yesterday by the arrival of another Soviet starlet, Elena Dementieva. Seventeen, leggy and blonde, with elongated fingernails painted metallic silver, she ultimately succumbed to that gnarled veteran, Martina Hingis.

The Swiss miss visibly

frowned upon the gallery's allegiance to the unknown Dementieva, but she will be in for more of the same — and then some — when she faces Jelena Dokic, the 15-year-old local heroine, tomorrow.

Hingis has grown up to crave her fame. She describes herself as one of the game's Spice Girls, often treating herself to extravagant diamonds as reward for her performance. In an effort to further brighten her profile, she has enlisted an established crowd-puller as her doubles partner here. However, in choosing Kournikova, Hingis may already be dwelling on the past.

Rusedski beaten, page 46

London lures grand slam of leading marathon men

By David Powell, Athletics Correspondent

IN 1972, at the peak of his fame as British sport's best-loved rascal, Dave Bedford sent a message home from the Munich Olympic Games. "Stop whatever you are doing at 5.15pm," he said, via a back page lead in *The Sun*, "gather the family around the TV set and watch me win the 10,000 metres gold medal for Britain." He finished sixth.

Bedford is more guarded now in the things he says, otherwise he might have been tempted yesterday to shout the following: "Stop whatever you are doing on Sunday morning, April 18, gather the family around the TV set and watch the greatest marathon ever run."

Instead, in revealing the quality of the field that he has signed for the Flora London Marathon, Bedford went no further than to suggest that it was merely "the strongest we have ever assembled." Understatement? Definitely. Given

the names included, and their achievements, there is the potential for London to witness the fastest and most thrilling slog over 26 miles and 385 yards in history.

Bedford, showing the power of his chequebook, has signed the grand slam of honours holders: the world champion,

Abel Anton, from Spain; the Olympic champion, Josiah Thugwane, from South Africa; the European champion, Stefano Baldini, from Italy; the world record holder, Ronaldo da Costa, from Brazil.

Additionally, providing depth that even the world championship in Seville this year is unlikely to match, Bedford has secured Khalid Khanouchi, from Morocco, Josephat Kiprono, from Kenya, Alberto Juzgado, from Spain, Antonio Pinto, from Portugal, and Lee Bong-Ju, from South Korea. Each is a man of substance in the world of elite marathon running.

"To have eight runners capable of running under 2hr 30min is formidable," Bedford said, again with understatement. I count nine, perhaps more. We can forget the idea of the first British men's winner since Eamon Martin in 1993, despite

the inclusion of Richard Nerurkar and Jon Brown, the domestic top two.

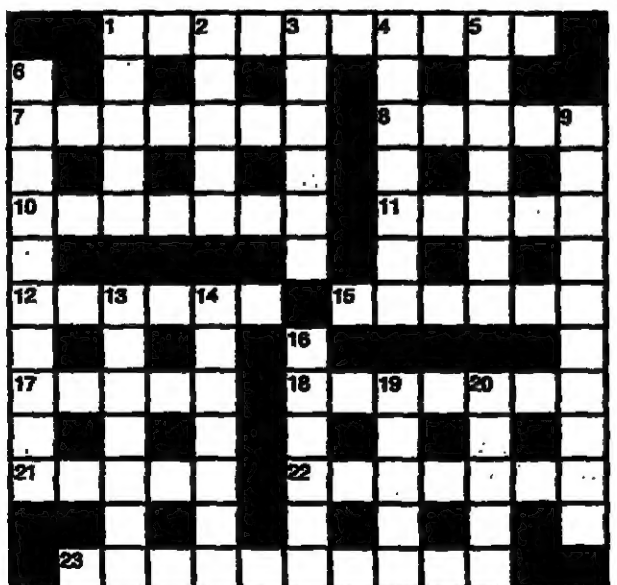
Historically, what has London got to beat to claim the best marathon ever? On time alone, the Chicago Marathon last year, when four men beat 2hr 8min; or Berlin, where Da Costa took the world record down to 2hr 6min 55sec; or the 1988 Rotterdam Marathon, with two men inside 2hr 7min 10sec. The London course may be marginally slower than some, but the size of the elite pack may counter the disadvantage.

Just as a 1-1 draw in football can be more entertaining than 3-2 win, a close marathon is often more memorable than a fast one. In that respect, there have been few marathons to compare with London two years ago, when Pinto beat Baldini in a sprint finish to the men's race, while Joyce Chipchumba, from Kenya, did the same to Liz McColgan in the women's.



Thugwane: Olympic gold

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1621

ACROSS

- 1 Is almost late (4,2,4)
- 7 Towards centre (7)
- 8 Coherent-light beam (5)
- 10 Shared transport arrangement (3,4)
- 11 One acting for another (5)
- 12 (At one's) bidding (6)
- 15 Of the teeth (6)
- 17 Metal mixture (5)
- 18 Set of targets, victims (3,4)
- 21 Russian whip (5)
- 22 Redwood tree (7)
- 23 Impudence (10)

DOWN

- 1 Shrink in fear (5)
- 2 Trunk (of body) (5)
- 3 Contemptuous remark (6)
- 4 Greenery (7)
- 5 In earliest development (7)
- 6 Totally dark (5-5)
- 9 Old, shaky vehicle (10)
- 13 Delay starting; keep at bay (4,3)
- 14 (US) unethical eg lawyer (7)
- 16 Selected (6)
- 19 Woman's small hat (5)
- 20 Tusk material (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 1620

ACROSS: 1 Villa 4 Curious 8 Level best 9 Bye 10 Tube 11 Teetotal 13 Prefer 14 Wolsey 17 Repriser 19 Moss 22 Née 23 Conducive 24 Respect 25 Tight
DOWN: 1 Valet 2 Lovable 3 Axle 4 Clever 5 Rotation 6 Orbit 7 Shelley 12 Mediocore 13 Partner 15 Snoring 16 Magnet 18 Press 20 Scent 21 Curt

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